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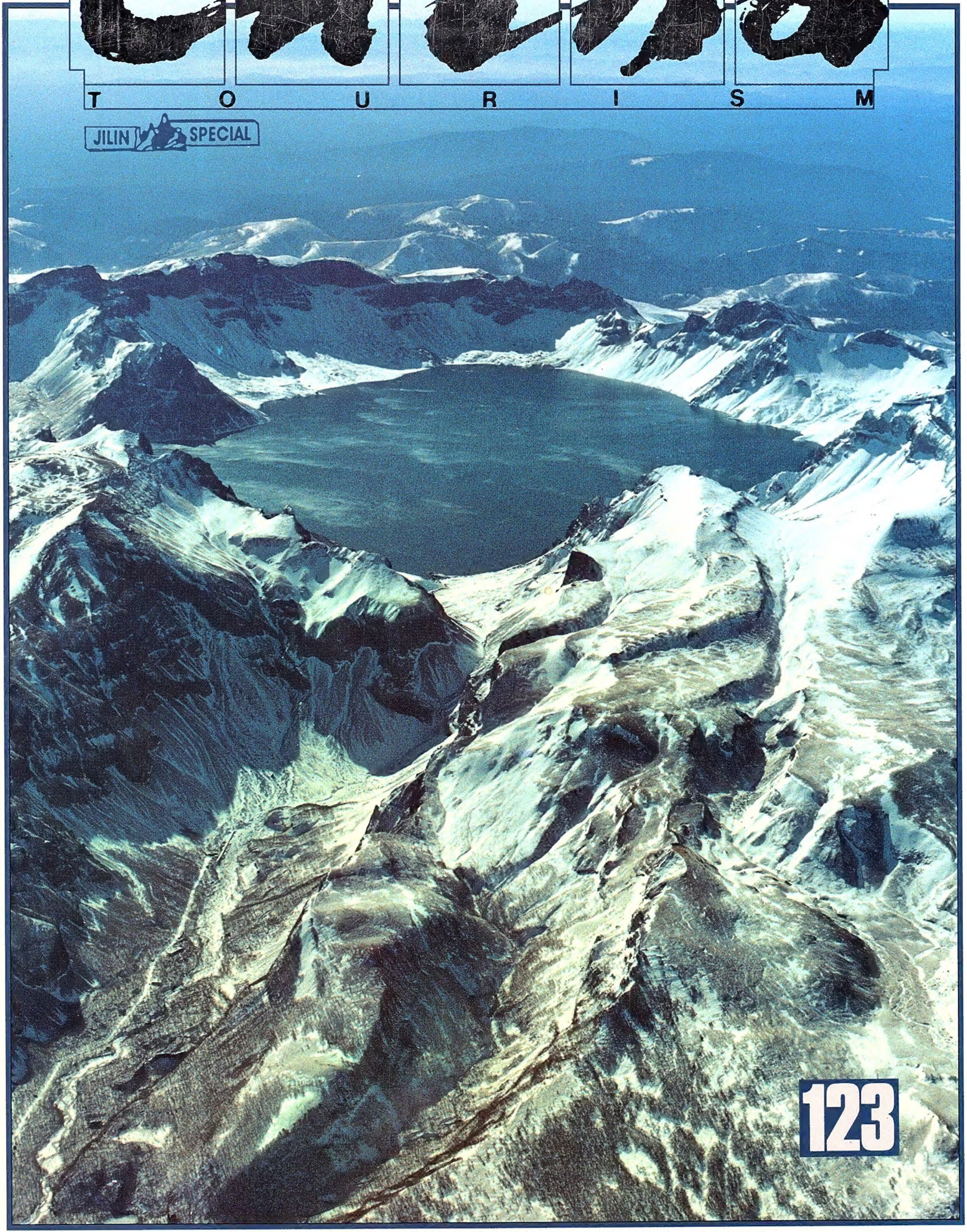

123

CHANGBAI MOUNTAINS • YANBIAN KOREANS • JI'AN • GINSENG • SIKA DEER

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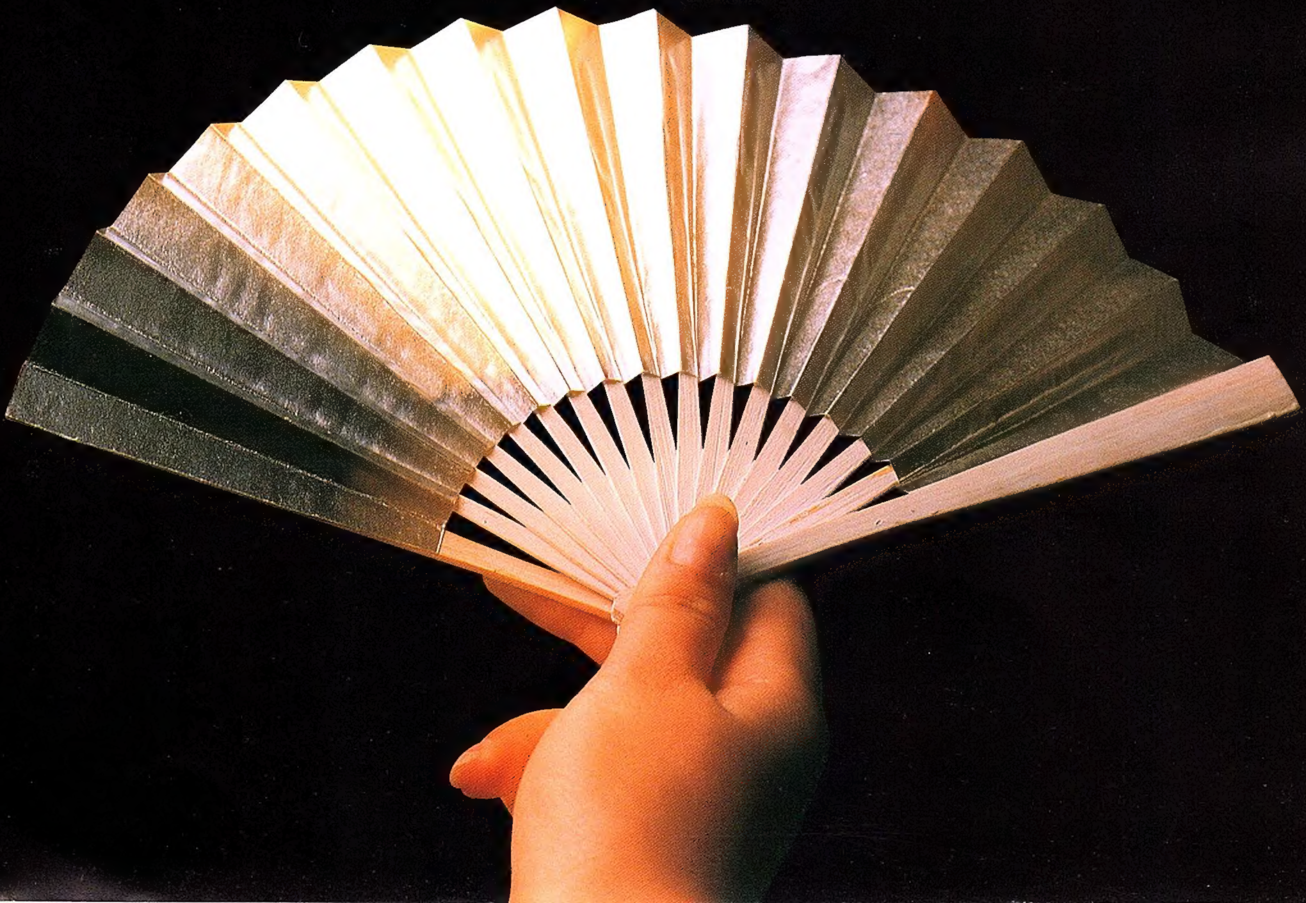

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EDITORIAL

Natural Paradise of the Northeast

In northeastern China's Jilin Province lies a wilderness region of surpassing beauty – the Changbai Mountains. Although its forests mean that logging is an important industry, a large expanse of the generally fairly low range is protected as the Changbai Mountain Nature Reserve. Thanks to its vast array of plant species, it has also been included in UNESCO's international biosphere reserve network since 1980. Scientific research continues in what is said to be a near-perfect example of a temperate-zone ecosystem.

Snow-covered for around nine months of the year, the major peak in the range, Baitou, straddles the Sino-North Korean border. Its crowning glory is Lake Tianchi, the largest, highest and deepest crater lake in China. This was a sacred place of the Nüzhen tribe, the ancestors of the Manchus who rose to rule all of China as the Qing dynasty (1644-1911), and one can see why. It exerts a strange fascination on all who go there.

The 11th Asian Games should be starting any day now. We take a look at how the Chinese capital has been preparing for the expected onslaught of thousands of athletes, coaches, organizers and spectators this September.

In this issue, too, we launch Trade Link – a new occasional column – with a spectacular silk fashion show held in Guangzhou earlier this year.

ERRATUM – Issue no. 122
On page 54 ('Zhalong – A Bird-Watcher's Paradise'), photo 1 was in fact by Liu Xiangyang.
Our apologies.

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been bred for their antlers in Shuangyang County for around 150 years.

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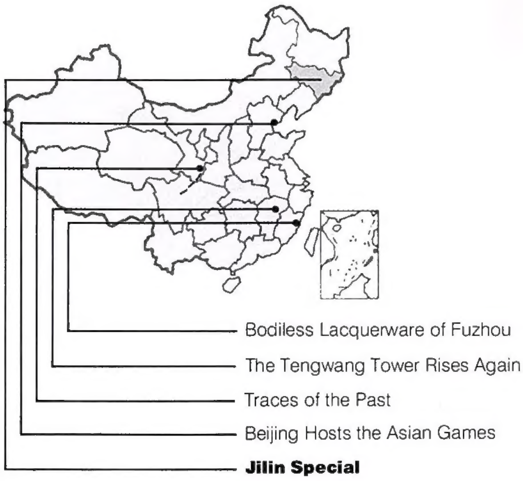
Bodiless Lacquerware of Fuzhou
The Tengwang Tower Rises Again
Traces of the Past
Beijing Hosts the Asian Games
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Photo by Xin Fang

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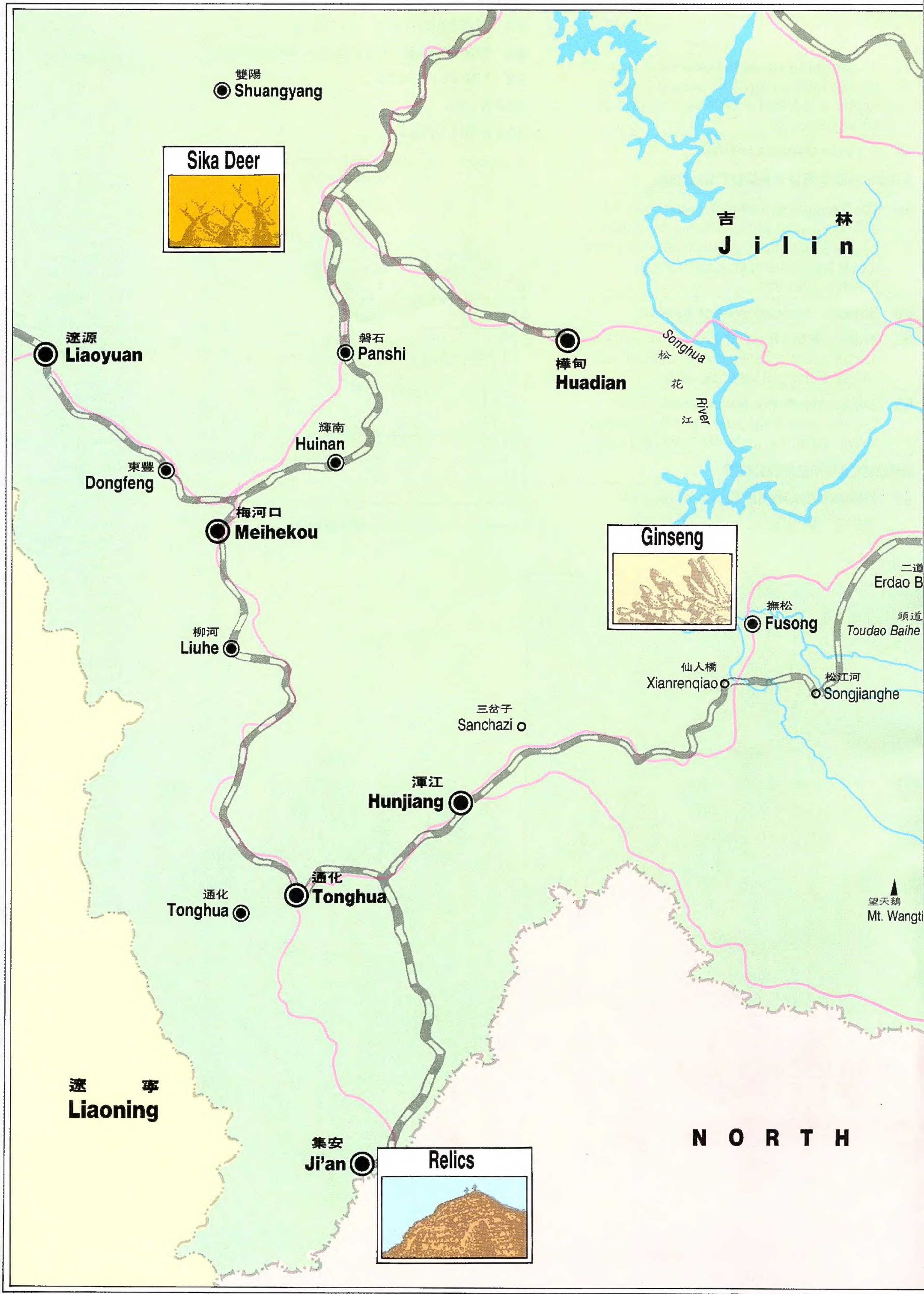
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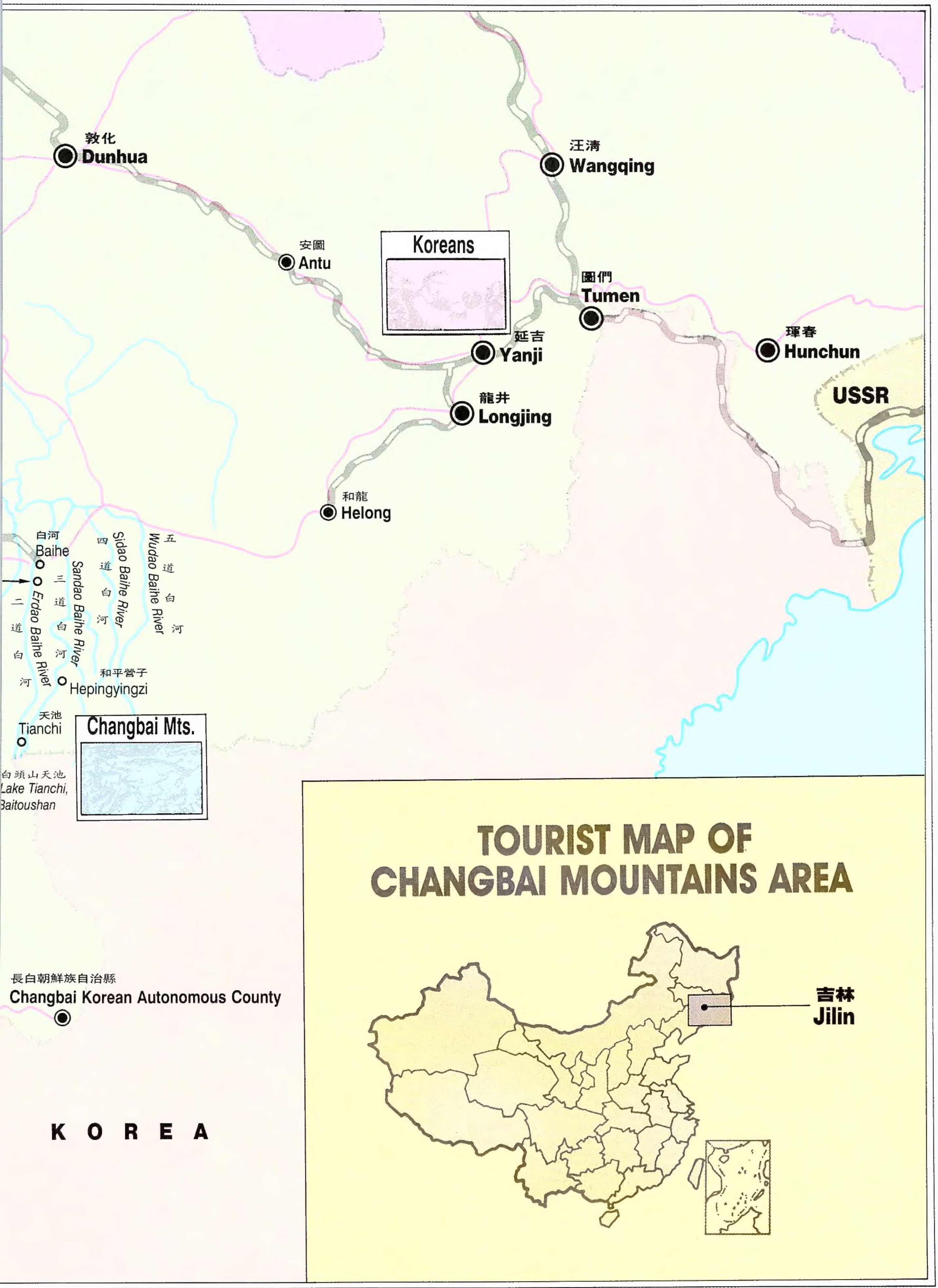


TOURIST MAP OF CHANGBAI MOUNTAINS AREA

敦化
Dunhua
汪清
Wangqing
安圖
Antu
Koreans
圖們
Tumen
延吉
Yanji
琿春
Hunchun
USSR
龍井
Longjing
和龍
Helong
白河
Baihe
五道白河
Wudao Baihe River
四道白河
Sidao Baihe River
三道白河
Sandao Baihe River
二道白河
Erdao Baihe River
和平營子
Hepingyingzi
天池
Tianchi
Changbai Mts.
白頭山天池
Lake Tianchi,
Baitoushan
長白朝鮮族自治縣
Changbai Korean Autonomous County
KOREA
吉林
Jilin

JILIN SPECIAL

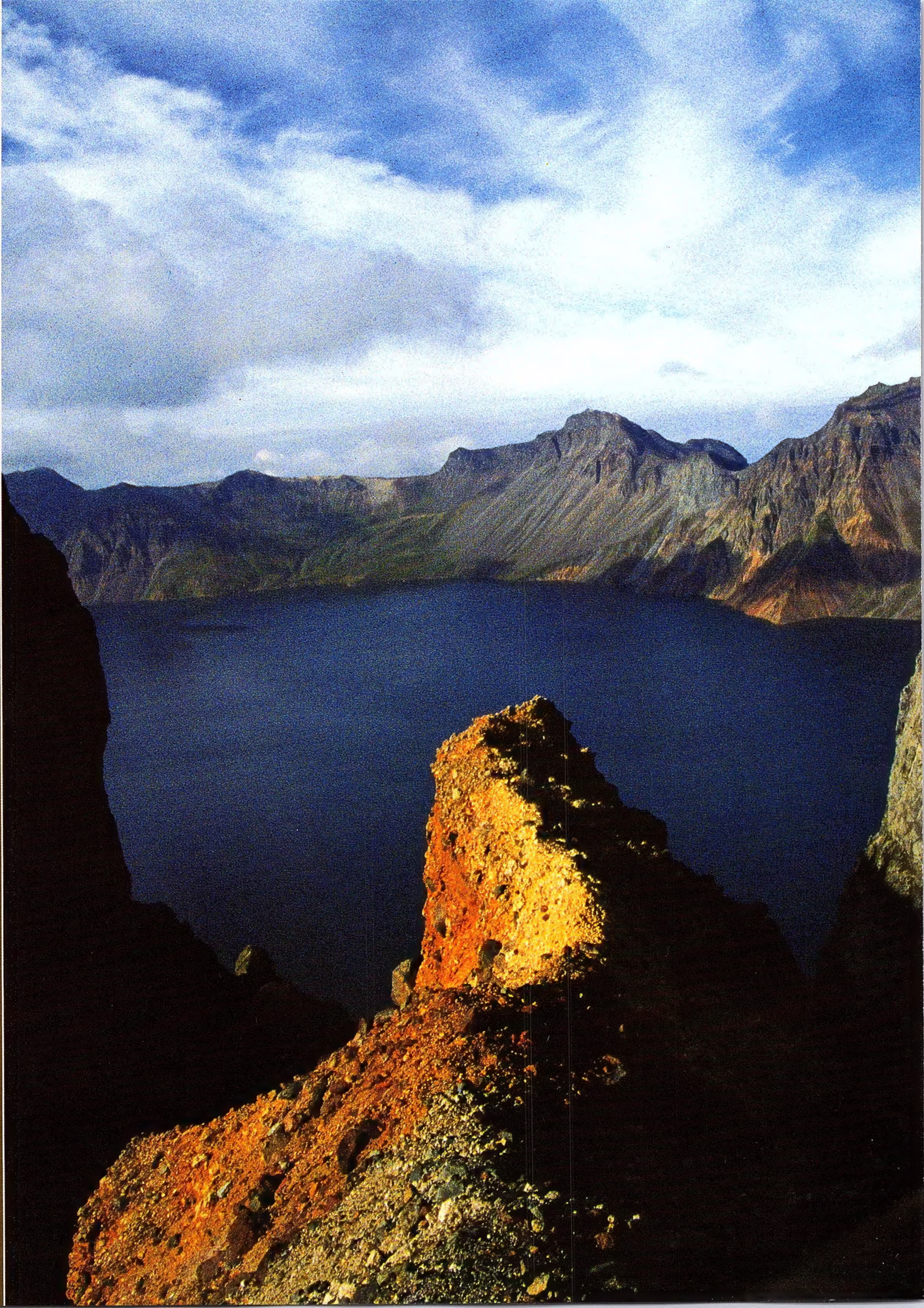
Wreathed in Mystery: The Changbai Mountains

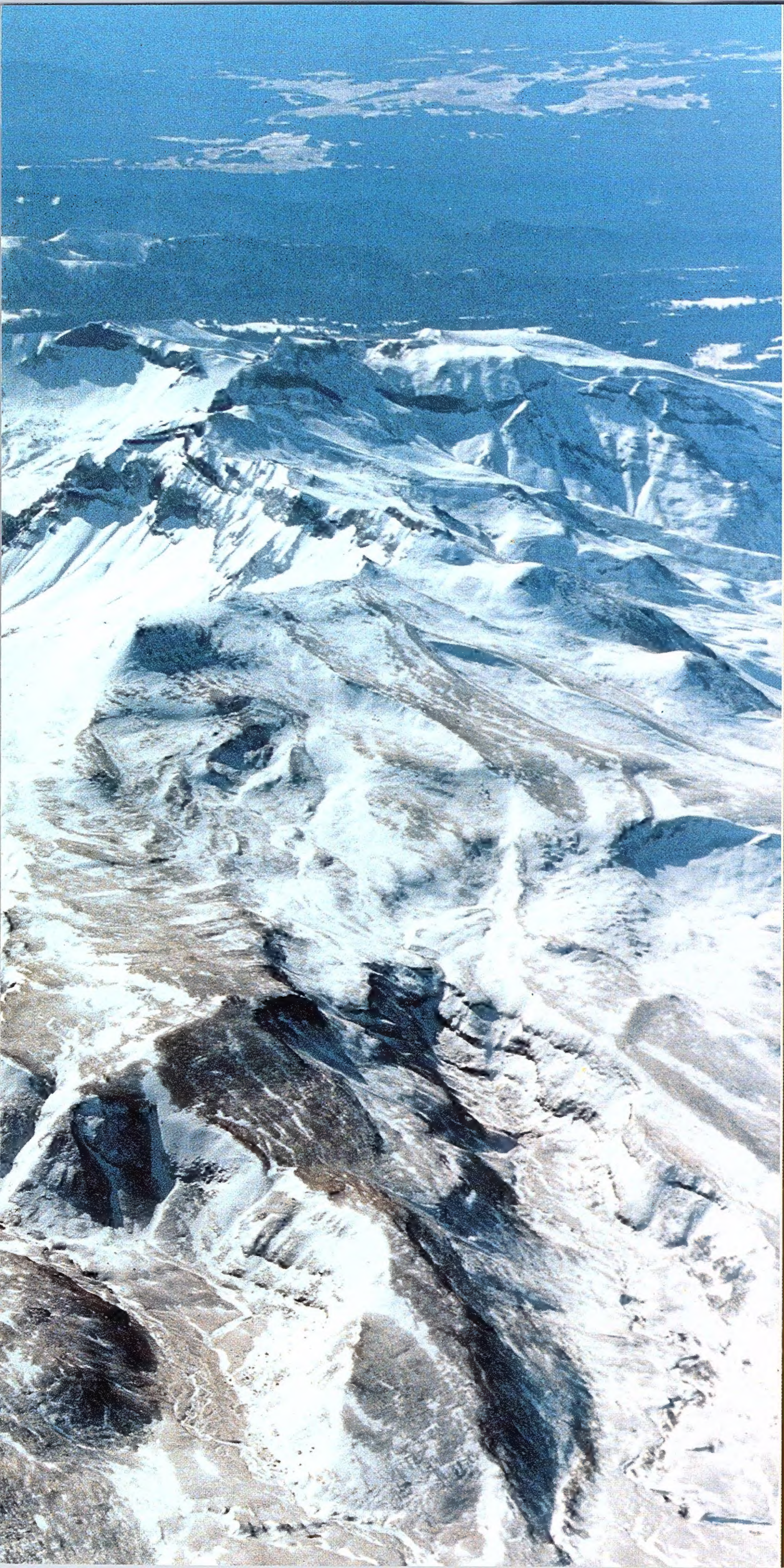
1

PHOTOS BY CHAN YAT NIN
ARTICLE BY HUA NIAN

Chan Yat Nin above Tianchi (1). Snow covers the Mount Baitou region for almost nine months of the year (2, by Lang Qi). Cowberries make excellent wine (3) while this forest fungus is considered a delicacy (4). Under these conditions, it's a case of survival of the best-adapted (5) (4 and 5 by Zhang Qi).

2





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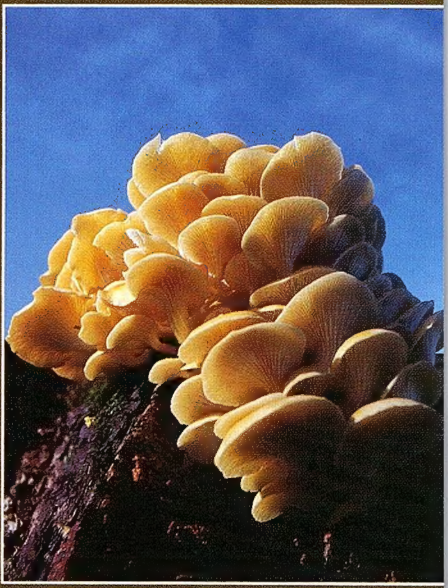


4

5

I have climbed quite a few of the famous mountains of China, each with its own special features. But I must say that there is none so primitive, so mysterious, so imposing and vast as the Changbai (Eternal White) Mountains. This range runs through the eastern part of the provinces of Liaoning, Jilin and Heilongjiang in northeastern China and along the Sino-North Korean border for approximately a thousand kilometres at an average elevation of 1,000 metres above sea-level.

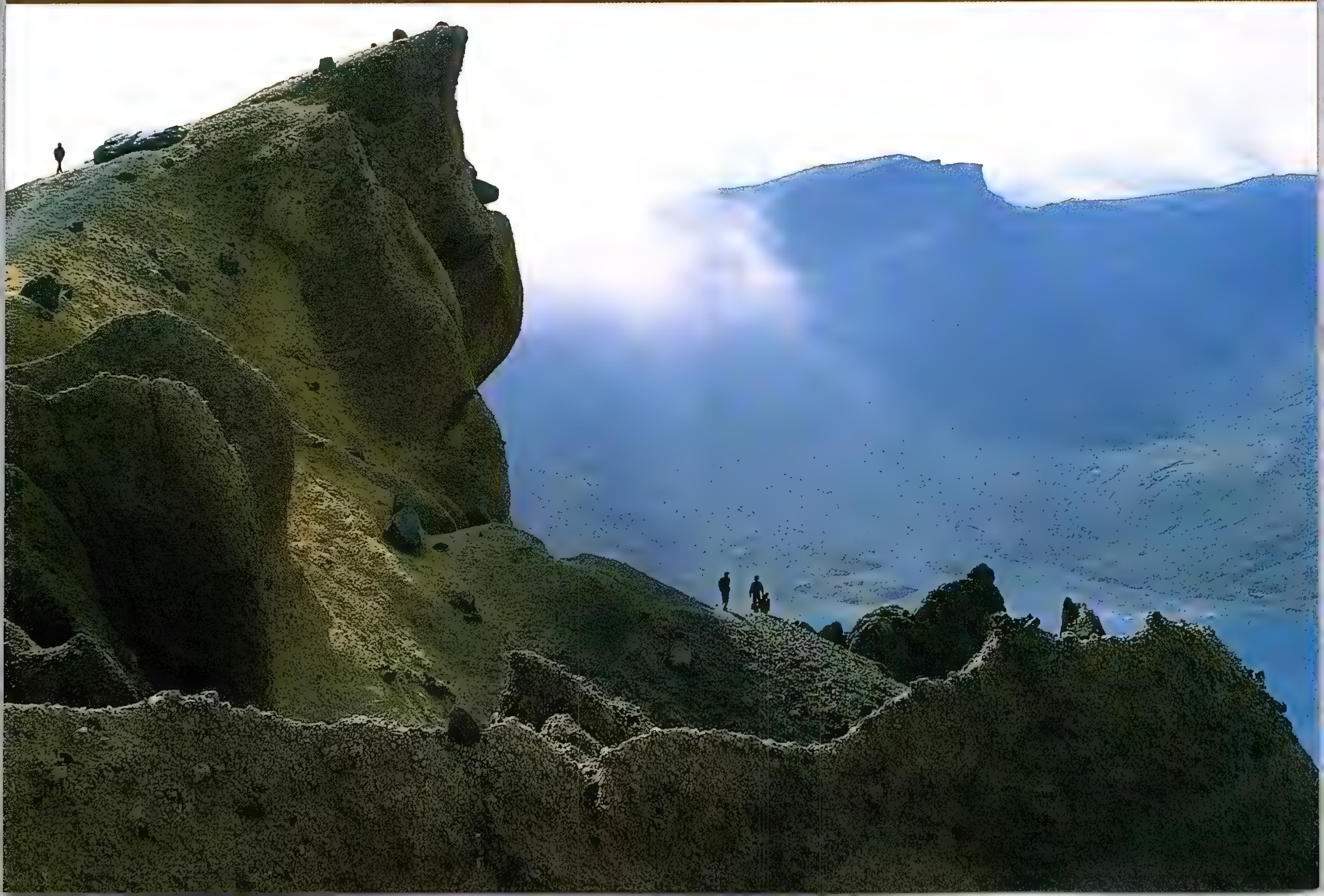
Primeval Forests

September is already mid-autumn in the Changbai Mountains. The jeep carrying my two companions and myself was driving through primeval forests – dark-green Manchurian pines as well as silver birches – extending as far as the eye could see. The mountains were totally hidden from view. When the road we were following climbed on to a flat saddle it was as though we had been tossed up to the crest of the wave, the forest being the sea. The vast expanse of trees rose and fell before our eyes to the far horizon, where a peak glistened gold and silver under the setting sun: Mount Baitou (White Head), the main peak in the range.

According to the *Beishi* (*Northern History*), a record of events from the Northern Wei to the Sui dynasty (386-618) written in the Tang dynasty (618-907): 'South of the State of Mohe is a mountain named Taihuang, which is held in awe by the common people. No-one dares to pass water there for fear of contaminating it so that, in case of absolute necessity, one has to carry

2

Lake Tianchi (1), deep in its ring of bizarre volcanic peaks (3), exudes mystery. Mountain and lake are considered sacred – a fitting place for visitors' prayers (2).



the urine away in a container as one leaves....' The Manchus who founded the Qing dynasty (1644-1911) regarded the Changbai Range as their ancestral home and honoured it as a deity. The Qing court designated it as part of a 'forbidden zone', closed to the Han Chinese, which it remained until the nineteenth century.

As we dipped back down into the forest cover, Mount Baitou vanished from view. It got dark quickly and it was deathly quiet in the forests. Down here in the deep, moist soil grow many of the plant species for which the Changbai Mountains are famous, including ginseng and wild ginger. The only sounds apart from our jeep were those made by animals and birds. We felt quite relieved when we saw lights shining though the close-packed trees. Ahead lay the Tianchi Mountain Villa, our first night's stop.

The Power of the Volcano

Early next morning I was woken by the roar of a car engine. It was still dark outside — in fact, it was only five thirty. Bitingly cold air hit my face as I left the villa's shelter. Zhang, the driver, had warned us we would need our warmest clothes and I had to fight the urge to hide my face inside my down jacket. The average annual temperature in the region is only 3–7°C.

Day dawned as we zigzagged up the mountain track, and the immense silhouette of the mountain gradually came into view.

The road ended at the observatory at the foot of Tianwen (Astronomy) Peak. I got out of the jeep to look up at the peak, its top shrouded in dense cloud. Zhang assured us that, though the peak is enveloped in cloud most of the year round, the weather here is so changeable that it can make its appearance at any moment, usually around eight or nine in the morning.

I panted up the hill to the top where I found myself right on the edge of a precipice with a sea of clouds drifting by below. But then the clouds were dispersed by a breeze and the sun

1

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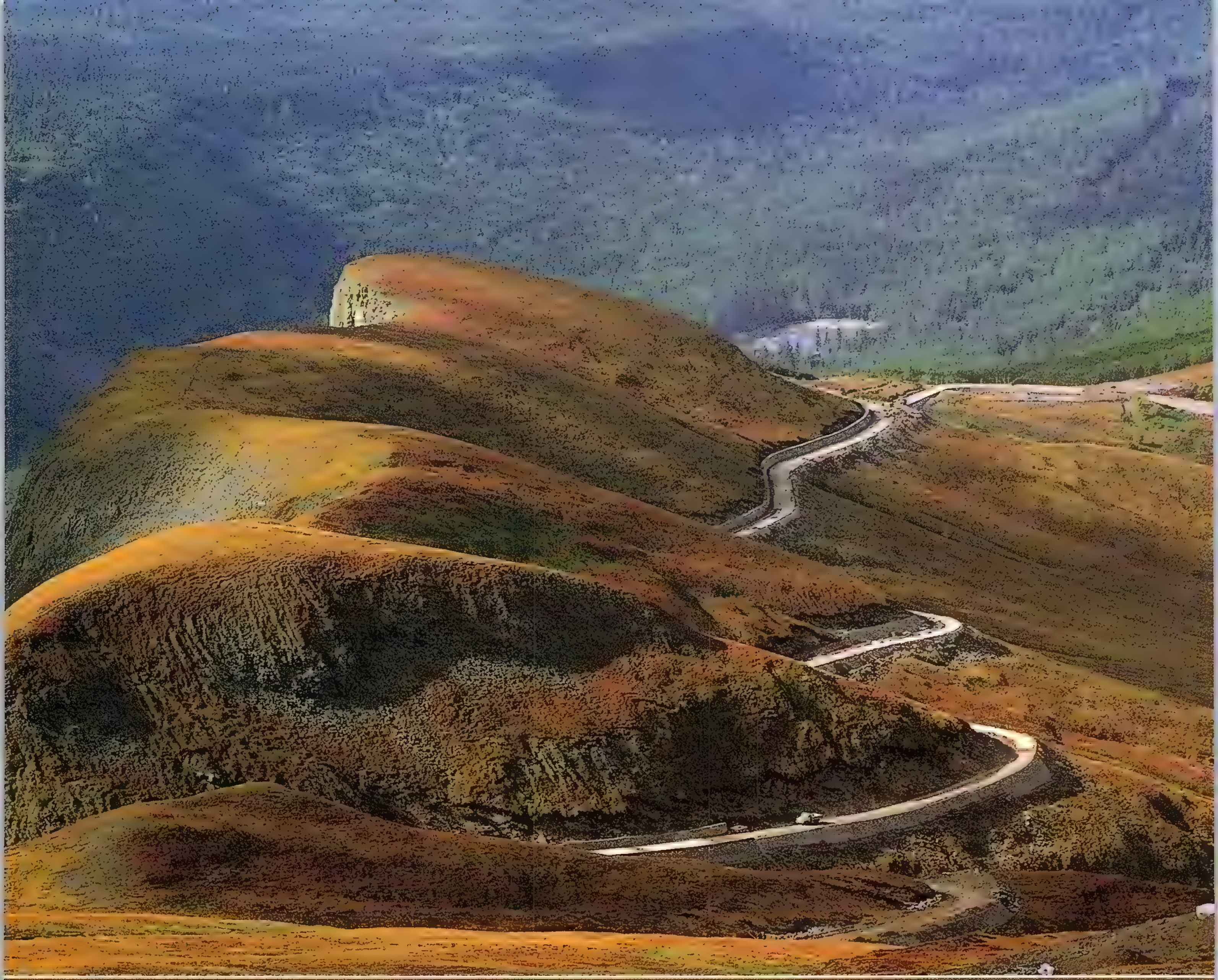


3

4

came out. It shone straight into the abyss which only a moment ago had been blanketed in cloud. Pools of blue appeared here and there and, within a few minutes, the clouds vanished completely to reveal a large lake reflecting cloud-capped peaks all around.

Like a mirror embedded deep in the heart of Mount Baitou, this is Lake Tianchi, the Lake of Heaven.

Huge pancakes make excellent iron rations (1). The pinnacles formed from lava and ash change shape continually under the influence of wind and rain (2). The road to Tianwen Peak winds upward through alpine tundra (3). The Tianchi Mountain Villa is modelled on a forest hunting lodge (4).

1

It is the largest crater lake in China, covering an area of nearly ten square kilometres. Moreover, it is set at 2,194 metres above sea-level and it is 370 metres deep. This amazing depth must be attributed to the fact that it has formed over the vent of a volcano where the most recent eruptions took place in 1597, 1668 and 1702. However, the eruption which produced the volcanic cone occurred some two to three million years ago, in the Quaternary period.

All around you can see the signs of the tremendous power unleashed by repeated eruptions. The inner side of the crater is dangerously steep, its grotesque forms resulting from the lava outflow. The outer crater ring is made up of a thick layer of loose volcanic ash, eroded in places by the elements to form a series of jagged pinnacles.

The peak on which we were standing – Tianwen – rises to 2,670 metres above sea-level. Baiyun (White Cloud) Peak to its west is even more imposing; it is the highest in northeastern China at 2,691 metres. Baitou, which actually falls within the territory of North Korea, where it is known as Paekdu, is the highest peak in the Changbai Mountains at 2,749 metres above sea-level, and also the highest peak in the eastern sector of the Eurasian Continent. The middle of Tianchi serves as the national boundary line, so that China and North Korea claim one half each.

2

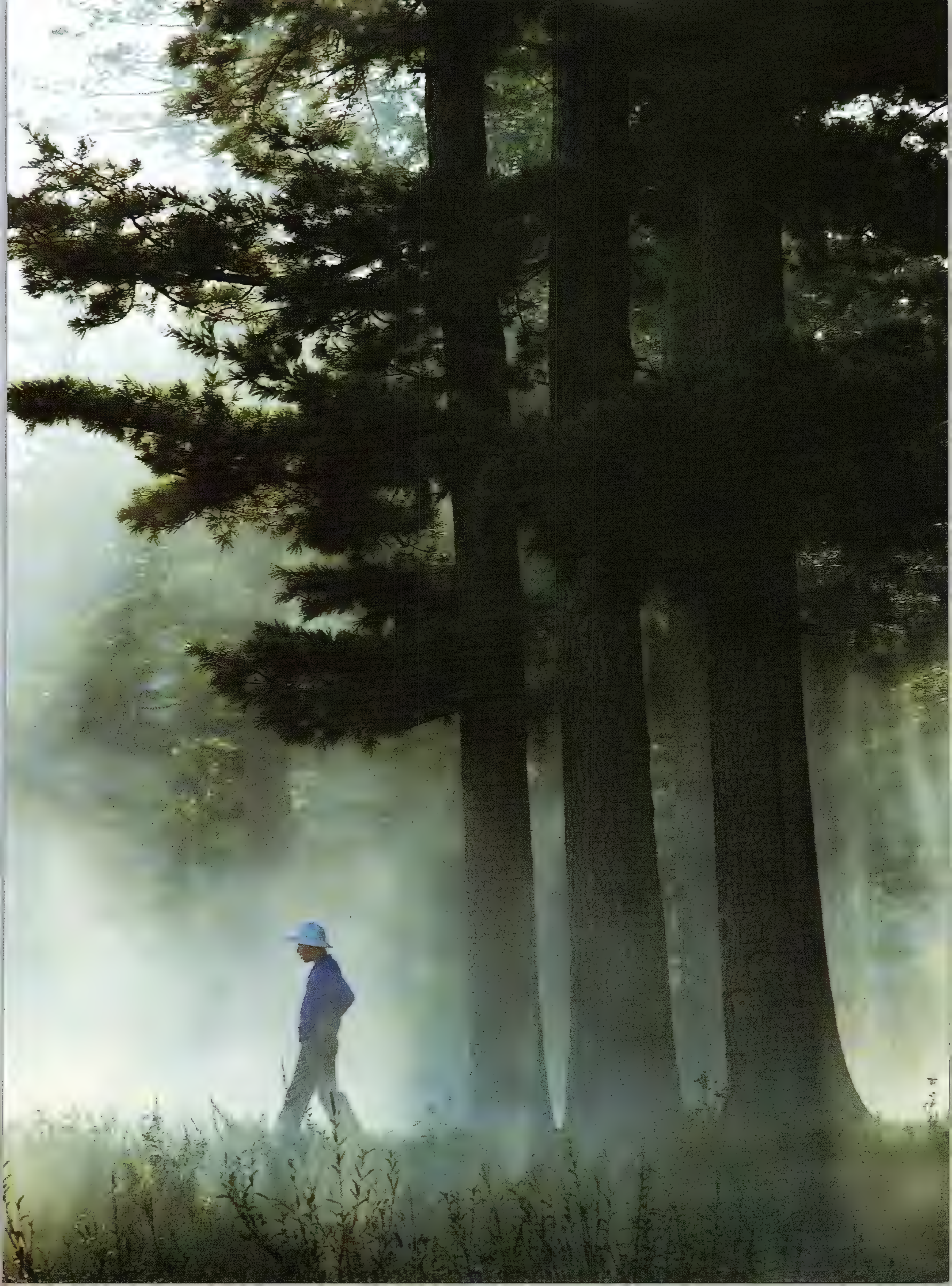
3

The Tianchi 'Monster'

There are no fish living in this lake. But many people swear that they have seen with their own eyes something large, living and – so far – unidentified....

It is recorded that, more than one hundred years ago, hunters found a huge creature haunting the lake. In the past twenty years, many more claim to have made a similar sighting, including the official of the Tourist Bureau who received us at the foot of the mountain. All these people have given a vivid description of what they saw, some having sighted as many as five such creatures on a single occasion. Some say that the part of its body emerging from the water as it moved along was more than four metres high. Others claim that it rose more than two metres above the surface of the lake and had 'a head as large as a bull, but in the shape of a seal's head, and a neck like a snake....' This is obviously the Chinese version of Scotland's

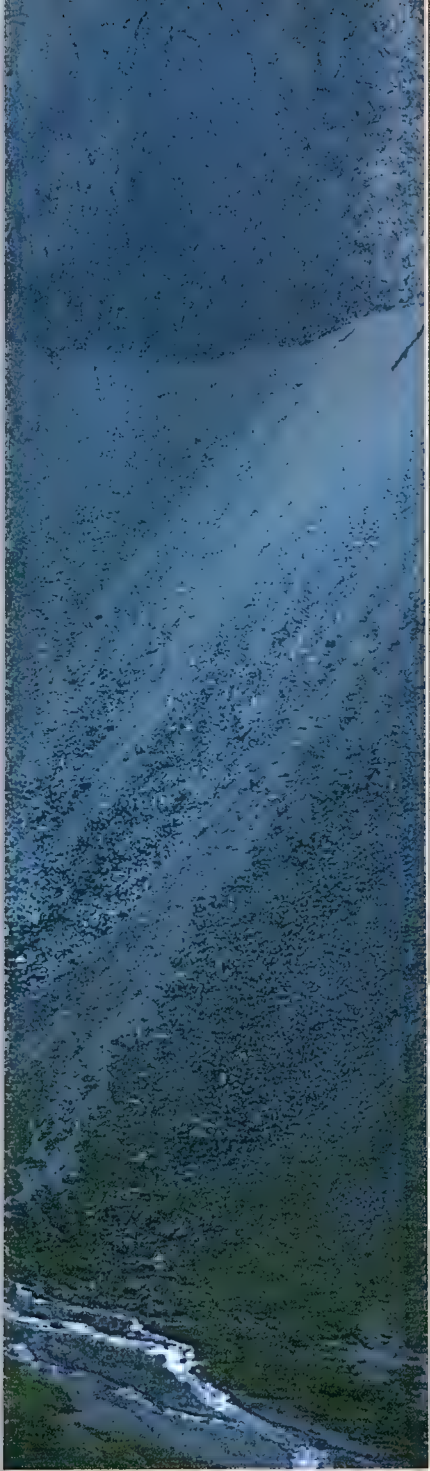
Mount Baitou rises above the forest like an island from the sea (1); thick stands of conifers (4, by Li Li) harbour a treasury of plant species (2). The Second Baihe River offers adventure in abundance for those who seek it (3, by Song Yaohuan).



1

famous 'Nessie', the Loch Ness monster!
Scientists find it difficult to explain such astonishing accounts. Lake Tianchi is located in the alpine tundra zone, where the ground is frozen for seven to eight months of the year. The lake does not thaw until June, and by September the snow starts up again. It is impossible for anything to live in the lake, with the exception of a limited quantity of plankton. Even if these huge beasts did exist, what would they feed on? But the number of those who insist they have seen SOMETHING is also not inconsiderable. Can it all be a

2



mere optical illusion, a trick of the fickle mountain light?

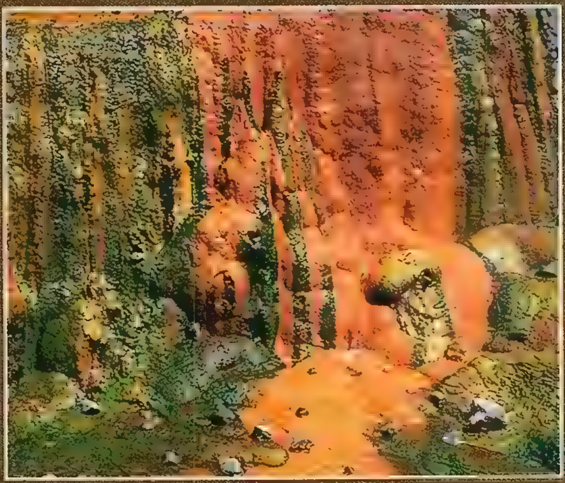
I stood staring at the lake with rapt attention, my camera — fitted with a super zoom lens — at the ready, expecting to be the one man in a million to succeed in taking an identifiable shot of the 'monster'. But, of course, it was not to be. After waiting a decent interval in case it showed up, I too had to leave with my questions unanswered.

We left the volcanic ash layer and descended to the tundra where we had to walk slowly and it felt as though you were trampling a sponge underfoot.

Though still in the frozen earth zone, this area, only a stone's throw from the ash, is overgrown with thick, soft lichens and mountain azaleas. Most eye-catching, however, is the spread of fiery red plants — including the alpine cowberry (*Vaccinium vitis-idaea*) and sundry bryophytes — blanketing the slopes, aptly known to the local people as the 'red carpet'.

Below this again is the dwarf Ermans birch belt, which forms the treeline. The trunks of the trees, exposed to the freezing winds, are twisted into shapes like dancing phoenixes or rampant dragons.

Jin, my guide, told me that it is possible to tell how high on the mountain you are by observing the vegetation. The Changbai Mountains can be classified into four clearly defined plant life zones ranging from the temperate to the frigid. Up to 1,200 metres there are mixed coniferous and broadleaf forests; between 1,200 and 1,700 metres there is a conifer belt consisting of Korean pines, spruces and firs as well as the Changbai larch; between 1,700 and 2,000 metres you find a belt of smaller, wizened trees dominated by the dwarf Ermans birch; and upwards of 2,100 metres the treeless, alpine tundra belt with shrubs including rhododendron. Above 2,600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The Changbai Fall (1) breaches the crater ring, giving access to the lakeside (2, by Jin Yongyi). Simple hot-spring bathhouses make a welcome diversion (4), the springs' mineral deposits combining with algae to produce startling colour schemes (3, by Han Ying).

4

metres you encounter a grey and barren zone where barely anything grows.

Probing the Source of the Songhua

We spent the second night at the Yuehua Guesthouse at 1,800 metres above sea-level, intending on the following day to go to see the Changbai Fall and from there climb up to Lake Tianchi.

So next day we again headed for the main peak along a U-shaped canyon traversed by the Second Baihe. The valley bottom was filled with forests totally different in nature from the forests on top of the cliff. Foaming waves covered the surface of the torrent. In fact, Baihe means 'White River'. Four rivers rise north of the main peak: the First, Second, Third and Fourth Baihe, which eventually unite to form the Di'er Songhuajiang (the Second Tributary of the Songhua). The head of the river is a waterfall cascading from Lake Tianchi, so it is the lake itself which is the true source.

As we climbed up the path, the canyon narrowed while the roaring of the river waters was joined by a dull growling noise like thunder. At the breach in the canyon, a huge column of water gushed down with mighty force, the spray rising dozens of metres into the air, so that the bottom of the valley was enveloped in mist.

The Changbai Fall is sixty-eight metres high. We began our climb on the cliff to the right of the fall. Since the rock here is a blend of hard volcanic rock and loose volcanic ash, it is unstable and the debris underfoot is horribly slippery — you only have to be careless or absent-minded for a second to stumble and fall. We helped each other but still had quite a hard time getting to the top.

The river on the upper level is called the Chengcha or 'Raft-Taking River'. It also has a fancier name — the River Tongtian or 'River Leading to Heaven'. This section is only one kilometre long. We walked upstream and soon left the rugged path to find ourselves right beside the lake.

Just as we were enjoying the scenery, a strong wind rose and clouds and mist billowed over from Huagai (Canopy) Peak to the east. The magnificent panorama was blotted out on the instant. We at once started down again, hand in hand.

1

2

We had just reached the head of the waterfall when we were hit by squalls of sleet, followed by snow and then hailstones as large as soybeans which stung our faces. Since we were understandably in a hurry, the scrambling and sliding descent took less time than expected. At the bottom of the fall the valley stretched out thick with snow and hailstones. And there had been bright sunshine only minutes earlier! Still, the storm cleared in less than half an hour and the sky over the Changbai Mountains shone as blue as before, the fresh snow on the ground shimmering dazzlingly.

The volcanoes of the Changbai Mountains are not what you could call deeply dormant. It is necessary for the underground fires to find outlets for their energy. The results are more than thirty hot springs which gush from the earth further downstream on the right bank of the Second Baihe.

Below the springs were several hot-spring bathrooms. We didn't need to think about whether to indulge or not. In we went! We stripped off our cold, damp clothes, plunged into the hot spring, and stayed there until we were pink and relaxed again.

The Southwestern Slope

Thus far we had been exploring the northern slope of the main peak of the Changbai Mountains. We said good-bye to our driver and guide, who had been with us for several days, and from Erdao Baihe took a train west to Fusong on the southwestern approach to the mountains.

A few days earlier, as we were climbing the main peak, I had wanted to go as far as the No. 6 border marker on the Sino-North Korean border on foot. But the peaks around the lake at that point are very steep and it would have been impossible to cross them. Instead I turned my attention to the No. 5 border marker on the southwestern slope.

Probably very few tourists go up and down Mount Baitou several times like we did. And there was no public transport or tourist buses to where we wanted to go. We either had to hitch a

The hot-spring zone below the Changbai Fall (3). Donkey 'jeeps', as they are called, are a common means of transport in Fusong (1), where fried scorpions are dignified as 'Changbai Mountain lobsters' (2)! The train between Erdao Baihe and Fusong has not changed in essence since the Japanese occupation (4).

lift on a timber lorry going into the forestry area or try and hire a car. With the help of the Fusong County Tourist Bureau, we finally got hold of a jeep. After driving past a small township named Songjianghe, we soon entered the forestry zone. On our way up the mountain, we had to pass through two checkpoints. The first was at the Forestry Administration Office where we were issued entry permits. Outside the office here we spotted a tablet bearing the words 'International Nature Reserve'. The nature reserve was set up in 1961 over an area of 190,000 hectares. Since these mountains represent a complete natural ecological system with rich fauna and flora, UNESCO included the Changbai Mountains Nature Reserve in its biosphere reserve programme ten years ago (January 1980). This is why entry is restricted.

1

2

Having gone through the first checkpoint, we found ourselves in a more luxuriant forest than on the northern slope. The place is, however, littered with timber as two severe tornadoes brought down hundreds of trees a few years back, destroying several hundred hectares of forest.

At the level of the Ermans birch belt, our way was barred by a second checkpoint. This was an outpost of the Chinese frontier guards.

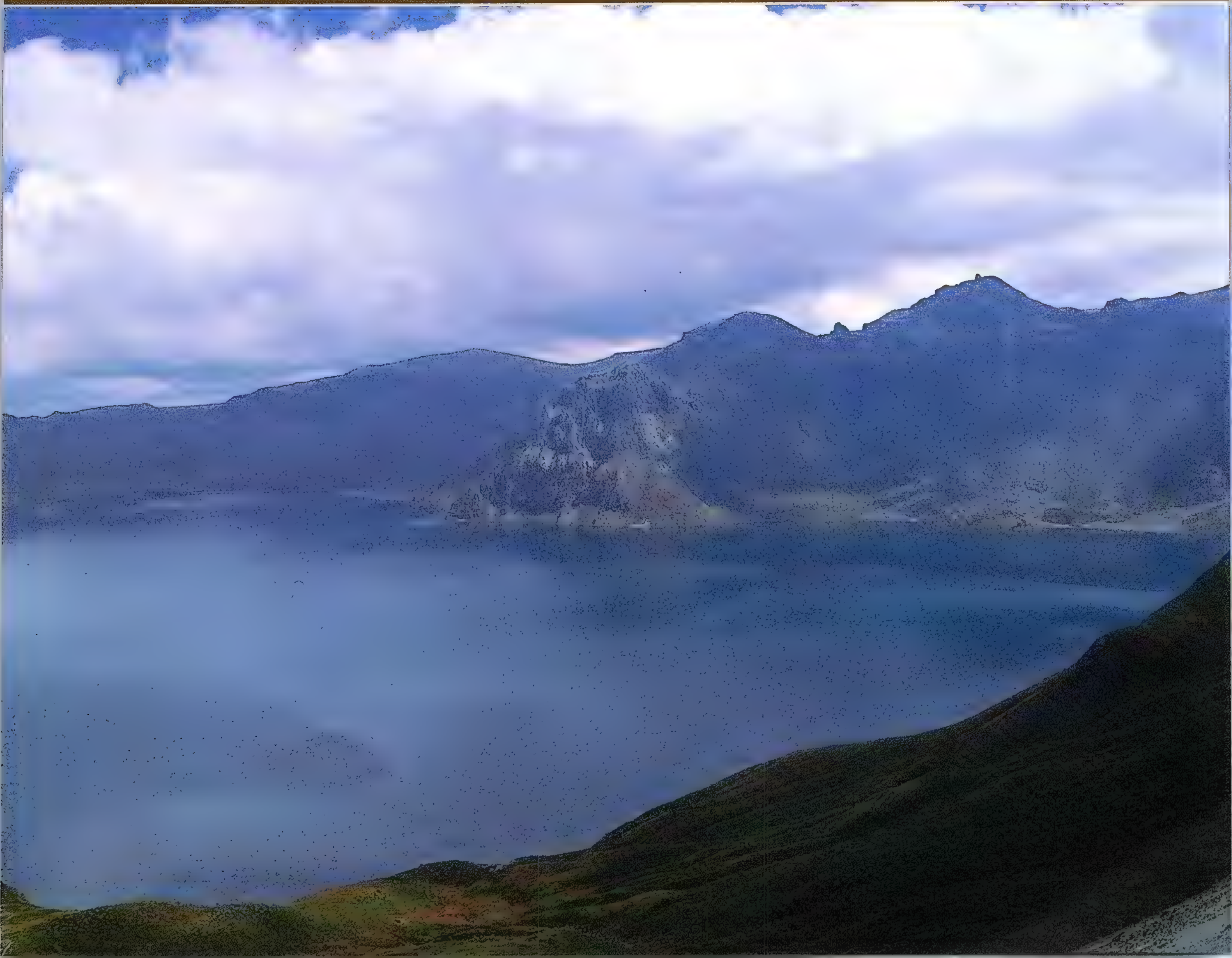
We all had to get out of the jeep and were subjected to a thorough search. Everything we had with us – including three cans of food, two watermelons and ten bottles of soft drinks – had to be entered in a register, item by item. Before we were issued a travel permit, the soldier there warned us that we must bring back the empty bottles and even the melon skins when we came back down.

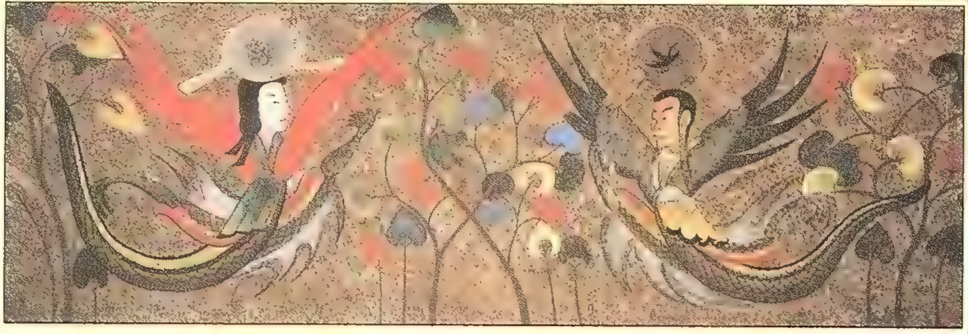
Our jeep stopped at the limit of the Ermans birch zone and we again set foot on the 'red carpet'. Soon we were back beside Lake Tianchi. The lake looked different from this angle. At the northern slope, our line of vision had been partially blocked by the peaks, but here we were able to enjoy unobstructed views over the entire lake.

At that moment, a beam of intense sunlight penetrated the cloud cover to shine over the peaks encircling Tianchi. Both lake and mountains appeared to be a picture of serenity, belying the destructive forces of nature which slumber here.

Translated by Ren Jiazhen

Lake Tianchi viewed from the southwestern approach (2), the location of the No. 5 border marker (1).





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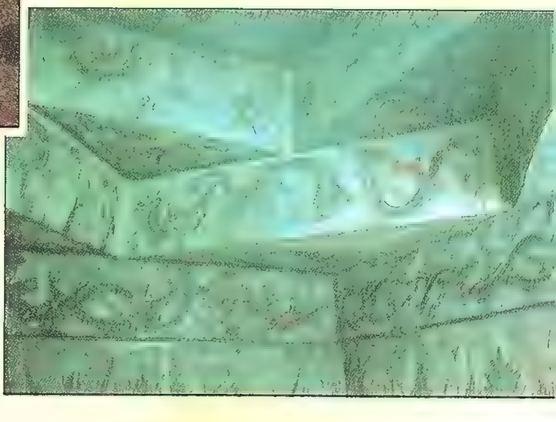

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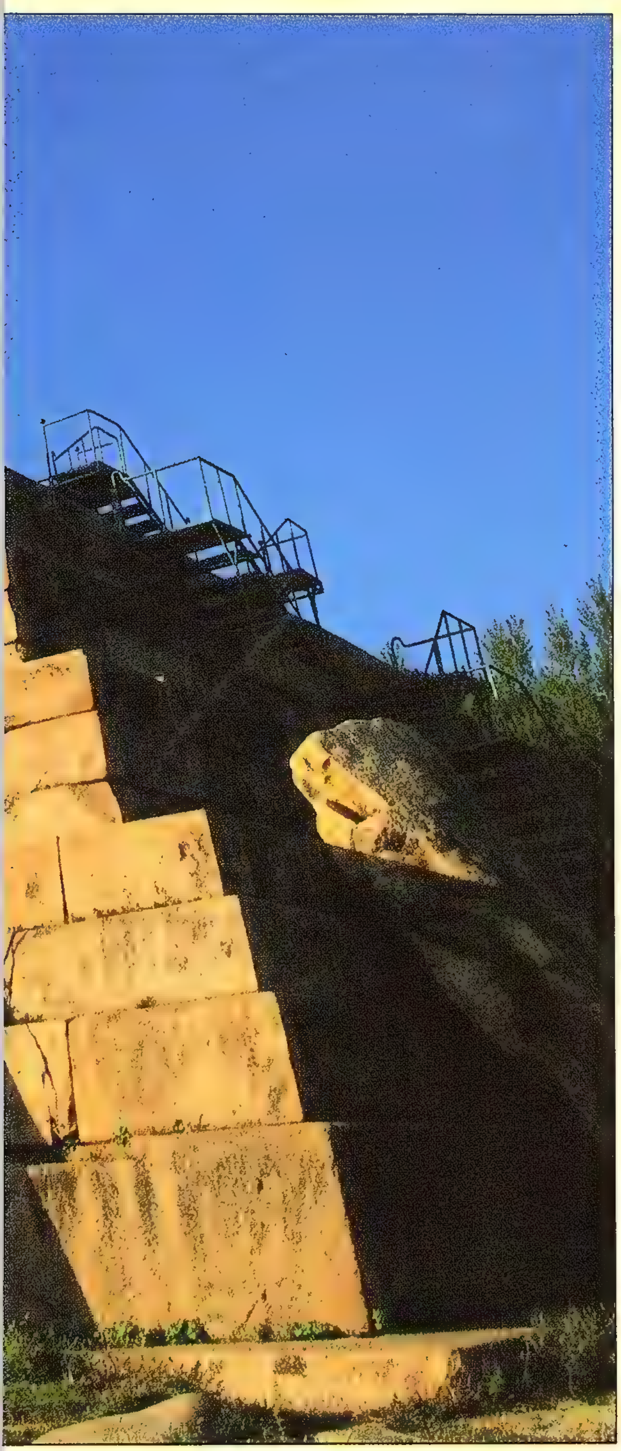

1

Ji'an – Capital of Ancient Koguryo

PHOTOS BY CHAN YAT NIN
ARTICLE BY TIAN HUO

The River Yalu flowed by placidly. A train rumbled across the iron bridge in the direction of North Korea. I was standing on the riverbank at Ji'an, a border town in the extreme southern tip of Jilin Province.

With a total administrative area of 3,217 square kilometres, Ji'an is shaped like a narrow hexagon. Its low houses, each with its own chimney, give it the air of a nineteenth-century town. As I strolled through the streets my thoughts turned to Gaogouli – the Chinese name for Koguryo, the early Korean kingdom – and of how in the year 3 it moved its capital here to Ji'an from Heshenggu (present-day Wunüshan in Huanren County, eastern Liaoning).

A low wall overgrown with weeds and topped with trees caught my eye. This is the remainder of the city wall of the ancient capital, which was then known as Guonei and was surrounded by walls to east, west, north and south which have, however, long since fallen into ruins. What we see now are probably the foundations of the walls. They are made up of rectangular stone slabs, receding the higher they rise, rather like a stepped pyramid. According to written records, Guonei had six gates. The northern and southern walls each had one, while there were two along the eastern and western wall sections. Could the gaps in the low walls which we can see today have been the location of the gates?

The *Chronicles of Three Kingdoms* is a Korean book which records the history of the three ancient kingdoms of Xinluo (Silla), Baiji (Paekche) and Gaogouli (Koguryo); it was compiled by Jin Fushi (1075-1151) of Gaogouli and others in Chinese, the script used by educated Koreans for many centuries. It contains a good account of how Guonei came to be built.

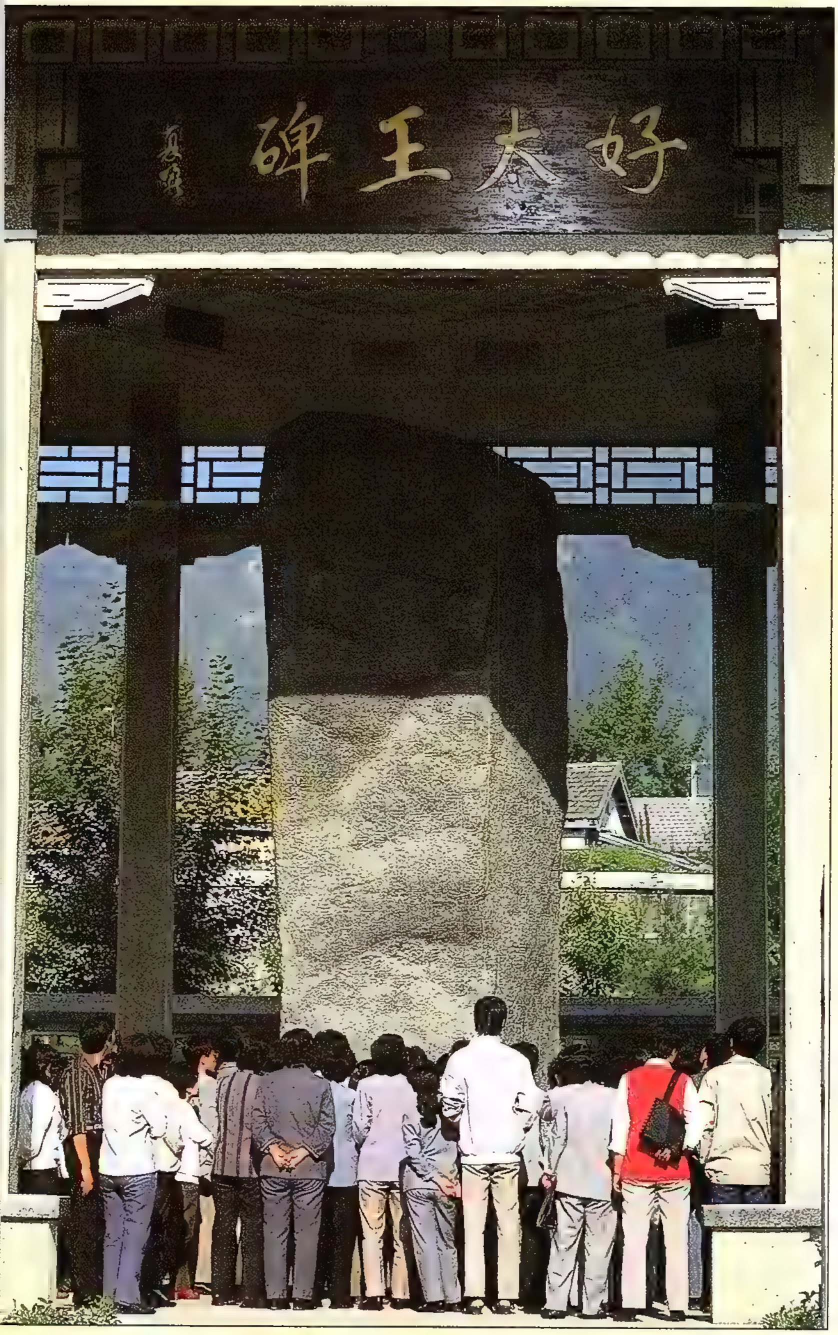
One spring day in the year 2, the twenty-first year of King Liuliming's reign at Heshenggu, a pig intended as a sacrificial offering ran away. Xue Zhi, the official in charge of livestock, hurried off to track it down and bring it back. Eventually, he was able to report to the king: 'I pursued the runaway pig to a place called Guonei which seems to have fertile soil. If we move our capital there, it will not only benefit our people but will also shelter us in time of war.' So the following year, the year 3, the king and his subjects moved and built a fortified settlement at Guonei. Gaogouli was centred here until 427, when the capital was moved to what is now Pyongyang, the capital of North Korea. However, Guonei remained the secondary capital until 668, when Gaogouli was overthrown by the forces of the Tang dynasty (618-907) in conjunction with Silla.

I wandered all around Ji'an but could find no ancient relics apart from the ruined walls of Guonei. However, I learned that there were other things to be seen three kilometres north of Ji'an, so I went there by car.

It turned out that the structures I had been told about on Mount Wandu are not yet open to the public. Even the mountain itself is out of

The pyramid-shaped General's Mausoleum near Ji'an (1). Some of the ancient Donggou Tombs contain murals (3), often of Han Chinese inspiration – here Fuxi and Nüwa in a museum replica (2).

bounds, so I could only gaze from a distance. This is a branch of the Changbai Mountains and rises east of the lower reaches of the River Donggou, a tributary of the Yalu. Walls were built along the mountain ridges in keeping with the natural contours of the terrain; they follow a semicircular layout and slope down to the south. From the hill I was unable to see what lay behind the walls, but I was told that they hide an ancient reservoir, thirty-seven tombs, the ruins of a palace, a watchtower and some barracks.



1

According to manuscripts, when he built Guonei, King Liuliming also constructed a stockade on Mount Wandu with the intention of using it as a granary, food store and arsenal in peacetime and as a fortress in wartime. Eventually the citizens of Guonei did have cause to retreat to these fortifications in 209 and in 342 under threat of war.

I looked down from a high point near Mount Wandu over the sprawling Donggou Plain below. Scatttered among the ripe crops were hundreds of graves which, at first glance, looked like small volcano cones. These are the ancient tombs of Donggou, built during the time of Gaogouli. Such tomb groups can be found all around Ji'an within a radius of dozens of kilometres. They number approximately 7,160 in all.

I descended to the plain to investigate several of the tombs. They can be divided roughly into two types: stone and earth. The stone tombs are said to have been built even earlier than the earth mounds. Some of the tombs have been destroyed and the stones at their entrances (mostly right on top) removed, exposing the empty tomb chambers. The farmers working nearby now use them as a makeshift place for their cooking fires or as shelter from the rain.

Later, I was told that archaeologists have made an extensive study of these graves and unearthed many artefacts, among them utensils characteristic of the locality. But they also found artefacts produced along the middle and lower reaches of the Huanghe (Yellow River) in the Central Plains during the Han (206 B.C.-A.D. 220), Jin (265-420) and subsequent dynasties. The murals in the tombs feature dragons, tigers, flying apsaras, the Scarlet Bird (a phoenix-like symbol associated with the south) and turtles, their style reminiscent of Han-dynasty painting. These relics give one a glimpse of the interchange which took place between the Gaogouli and Central Plains cultures. In fact, the Han dynasty ruled all the northern part of the Korean Peninsula and Gaogouli adopted the Chinese military and administrative systems.

On the advice of local acquaintances, I visited the General's Mausoleum, a well-known tomb in the wilderness four kilometres northeast of Ji'an. With its pointed top and broad base, it looks like a small pyramid. The mausoleum has seven tiers and twenty-two steps, each of which consists of a granite slab. At each of the four sides of the base are three mighty monoliths, even the smallest of which is said to weigh 1.5 tons.

The entrance to the mausoleum is on the third step. I climbed an iron ladder to get there, obviously a recent installation. A passage leads into the square coffin chamber, now bare except for two stone sarcophagi as a result of tomb robbers in days gone by. Though this is known as the General's Mausoleum, archaeologists believe that it was not a general but a king who was buried here, probably in the fifth century, judging from the tomb structure.

To the south of the mausoleum and about four kilometres east of Ji'an is a pavilion surrounding an inscribed stele six metres high. The latter is actually a pillar-like block of tuff put to its present use after being chiselled roughly into shape. This kind of rock – formed of consolidated volcanic ash and pyroclastic materials – has quite a loose composition and the stele's long exposure to the elements has accentuated its irregularities. The pavilion was only built at a much later date.

I took a good look at the stele. The inscription which covers all four sides is neatly executed. The spacing lines create an impression of meticulous arrangement which contrasts sharply with the cursive style of stele inscription popular in the Central Plains, but is no less attractive.

Research has revealed that the inscription records the achievements of King Haotai (reign dates 391-412), the nineteenth ruler of Gaogouli at Guonei, as well as legends about the founding of the kingdom and the system of keeping vigil at the tomb. Could he have been the ruler buried in the mausoleum? The kingdom in fact saw its heyday under Haotai who frequently led his warriors to fight against neighbouring states founded by other tribes of the northeast of that time, such as Fuyu, Baiji and Beili, and even against the Japanese pirates who haunted the coast.

Fuyu deserves further mention since it seems to be linked with Gaogouli. It was founded by an ethnic group called Huimo during the Eastern Han dynasty (25-220). According to historical records, a man named Zhu Meng fled from Fuyu to Heshenggu to escape some natural calamity and later founded the kingdom there which he called Gaogouli since Gao was the family name of most of its inhabitants.

Translated by Anne Yan

King Haotai's exploits are related on this tuff stele (1). The ruins of Guonei's city walls at Ji'an (2), and the Gaogouli tombs which dot the Donggou Plain (3).

Among the Koreans of Yanbian

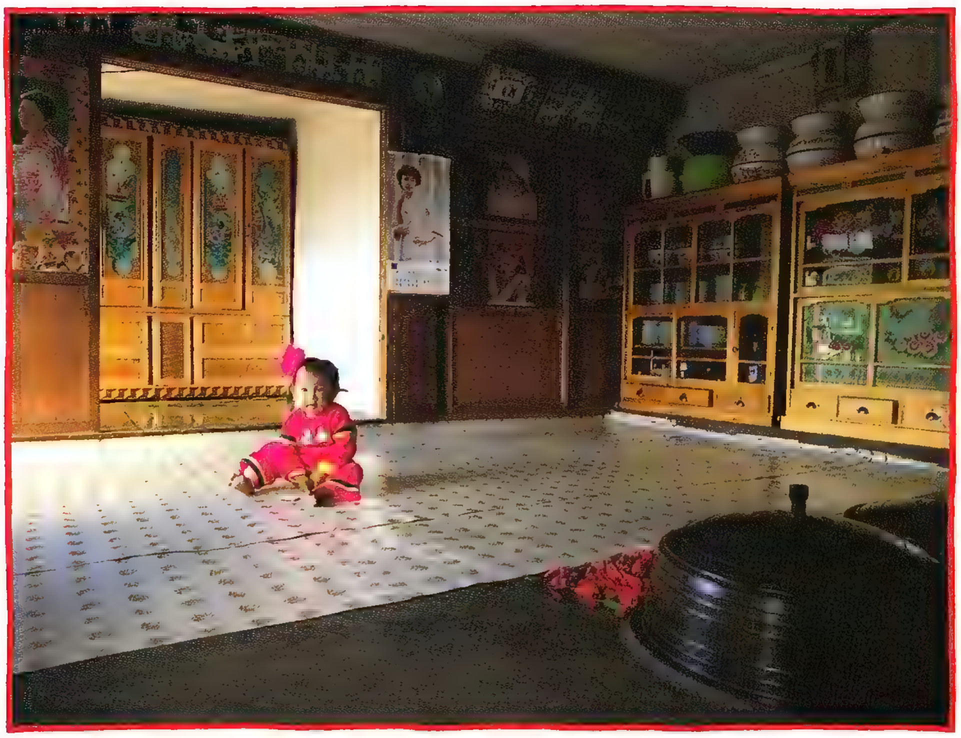
PHOTOS BY CHAN YAT NIN
TEXT BY JUN PING

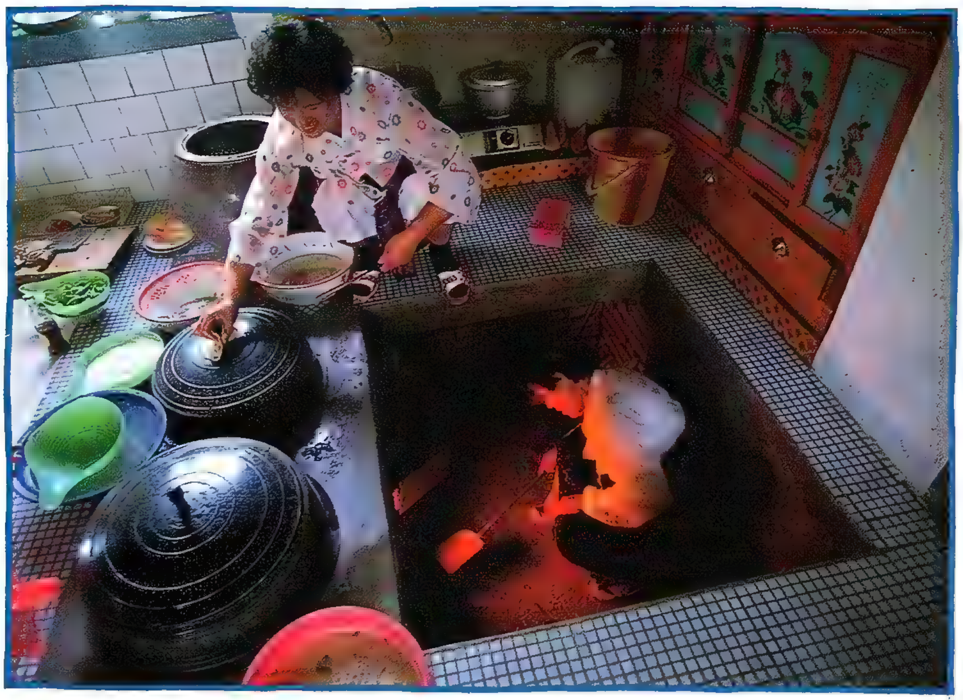
According to historical records, the present Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture in eastern Jilin Province has long been settled by peoples who are now considered ethnic minorities in China. The Sumo and other branches of the eastern tribe of Mohe, as well as the tribes which later formed the Kingdom of Koguryo (one of the three kingdoms which together developed into what is now Korea), are known to have lived here. The Sumo chieftain established a state called Zhenguo in 698 at the time of the Tang dynasty. In 713 the Tang emperor Xuanzong granted the title of Prince Bohai (Balhae) to the ruler of Zhenguo, which was thereafter known as Bohai. This area was thus part of a vassal state of Tang China.

Formally incorporated into Manchu territory in 1636, Yanbian came under the jurisdiction of General Ningguta following the establishment of the Qing dynasty by the Manchus in 1644. In 1714 the area was administered by an assistant commandant who had his office at Hunchun. In 1881 a higher officer – a deputy commander-in-chief – took his place, a sign of the importance given to this border area by the Qing court.

Korean is widely used in the autonomous prefecture, which is more developed in science and technology than many other minority areas. Its capital is at Yanji and – apart from Koreans – it is home to members of the Manchu, Hui and Mongolian nationalities, as well as Han Chinese.

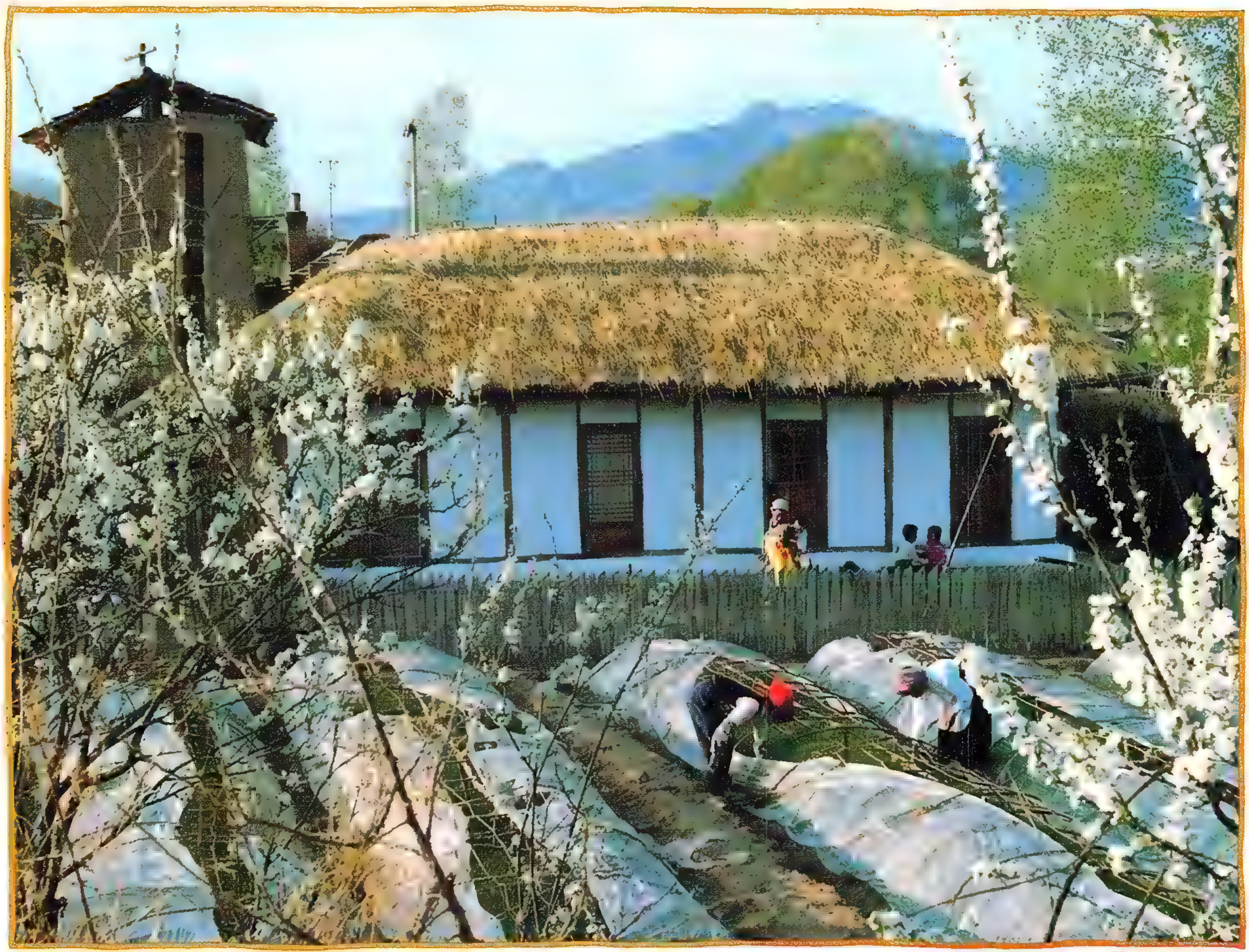
Korean customs and conventions continue to be observed, although some of the ancient ones can only be seen at traditional festivals.





△
One corner of the main room contains the kitchen area. The large cooking range is built into the floor in such a way that to light the furnace you have to climb down below floor level. The range is also the source of the heat that flows through the floor ducts, preventing dampness in summer and keeping the house warm in winter – something which is an absolute necessity given the climate of northeastern China. Once the room is warm, it can be maintained at a constant temperature with minimum use of fuel. The cooking pots are solid and of iron. Rice cooked in pots of this type is particularly tasty. The hand-operated water pump and a large water vat stand nearby.

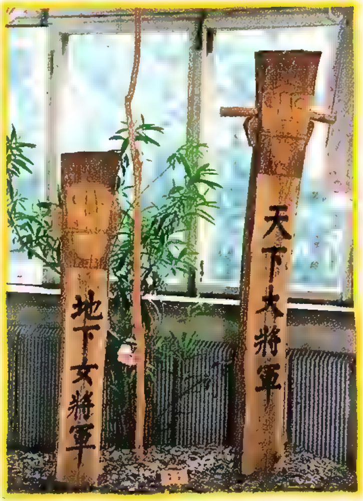
◁ So comfortable is the warm-floor heating system that Koreans traditionally just add cushions and live on the floor. Their houses contain hardly any chairs or benches, only low tables. Large and clean, the main room is both dining-room and sitting-room during the day. At night cotton padded quilts are spread out all over the floor, turning the room into a communal bedroom.
The cabinets set against the walls contain crockery in unusually large quantities by Han Chinese standards, far exceeding actual everyday needs. These make a proud display for the Korean housewife. Each family owns a complete set of crockery. It is simply not the Korean way to borrow from the neighbours should friends or relatives drop in and stay for dinner!



◁ As you approach a typical rural community in Yanbian, cosy-looking thatched cottages greet you. Chimneys made from tree trunks hollowed out by fire stand out against the whitewashed walls. Such free-standing chimneys are a feature of Korean dwellings, and they are connected to an intricate system of ducts below the floor which provides 'central heating'. These Yanbian houses are detached units, each standing alone in their garden. They are entered through doors barely distinguishable from windows. After the autumn harvest, tobacco and peppers dry on the rooftops, turning the village into a pastiche of yellows and reds.

Photo by Lang Qi

Koreans in China seem to have no single identifiable religion. They worship (or worshipped) a medley of village gods, totems and ancestors, all with shamanistic undertones. The local deities are carved in a plain style on unpainted wood, both male and female village gods wearing the black gauze cap of officialdom. The ones shown here are labelled 'General Under Heaven' and 'General Under Earth'. Such gods used to stand at the entrance to a village to ensure safe passage, a life of peace and a bumper harvest for its inhabitants. Since Yanbian Koreans no longer believe in such totems, these images cannot be seen *in situ* in villages, only in museums. ▷



◁ The wild geese which spend their summers in the prefecture are regarded as auspicious, a symbol of longevity as well as of a happy marriage. For this reason, a Korean groom takes a goose made out of wood with him when he goes to claim his bride from her family. When he reaches his bride's door, the groom pushes the wooden bird right to the threshold, using a fan, and presents it to his mother-in-law before he can take his bride away.

Young Koreans do not celebrate their weddings like their forefathers did, but in Antu County you can still sometimes see the old-style wedding re-enacted at festivals as a spectacle. Traditionally, the groom wore an elegant costume when he went to collect his bride. His hair was knotted in a bun and fixed with a 'dragon pin'. Over it he would wear a gauze hat of the type used by ancient officials while his robe would be tied at the waist by an ornate belt. His bride would wear a red robe and white shoes with upturned tips. Her face would be made up for the occasion with a pink beauty spot. ▽

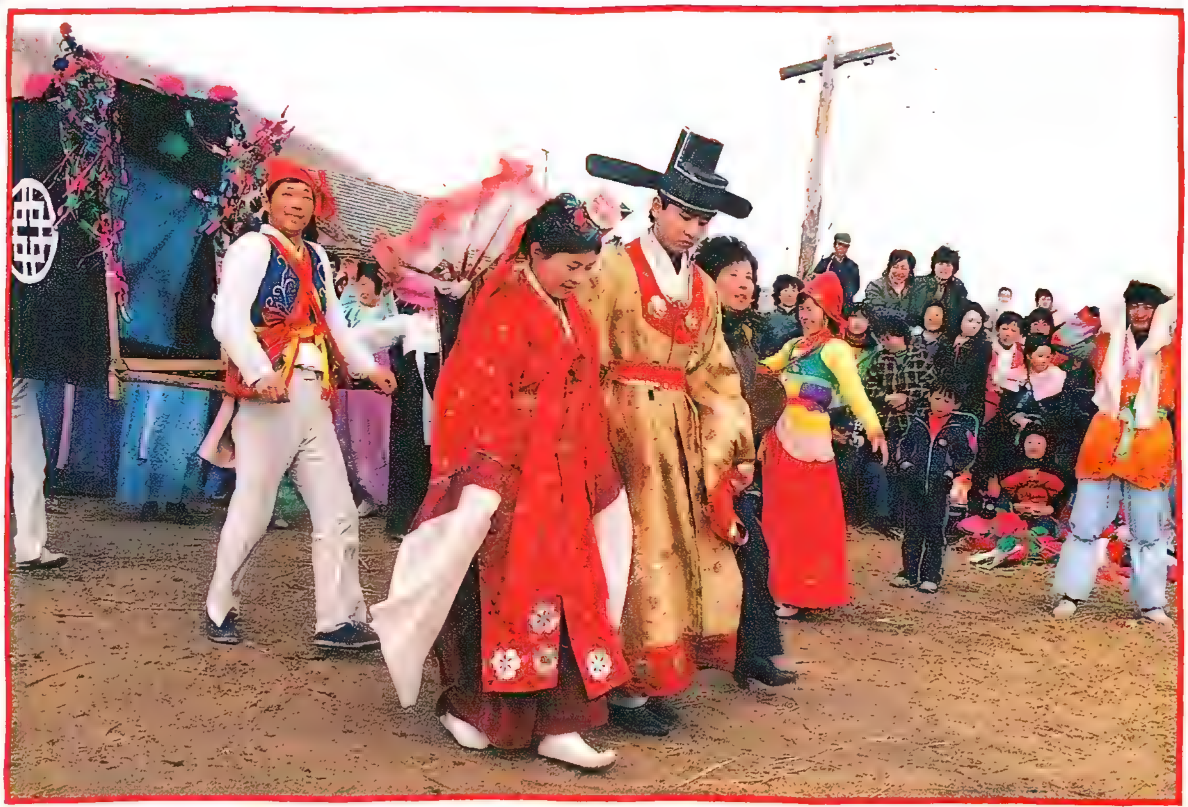


Photo by Huang Fansong

Korean women are adept ▷ at carrying things on their heads, even when walking fast, since this has been their custom for centuries. This skill has now been turned to good account in a sort of sports event seen at traditional festivals. The female contestants must balance on their head a rectangular trough carved from a log and filled with water. This can, of course, prove very amusing for the onlookers should an unlucky contestant lose her balance!

Photo by Nan Longhai

Photo by Yin Tongchun

The *kayago* was originally played in ▷ Korean aristocrats' mansions and at court. Later it spread among the ordinary people and has remained popular to this day. It looks very similar to the Chinese *zheng,* a zither-like plucked instrument, which also has twenty-four strings. The *kayago* produces harmonious sounds said to be like 'flying clouds and flowing waters'.

Photo by Yin Tongchun

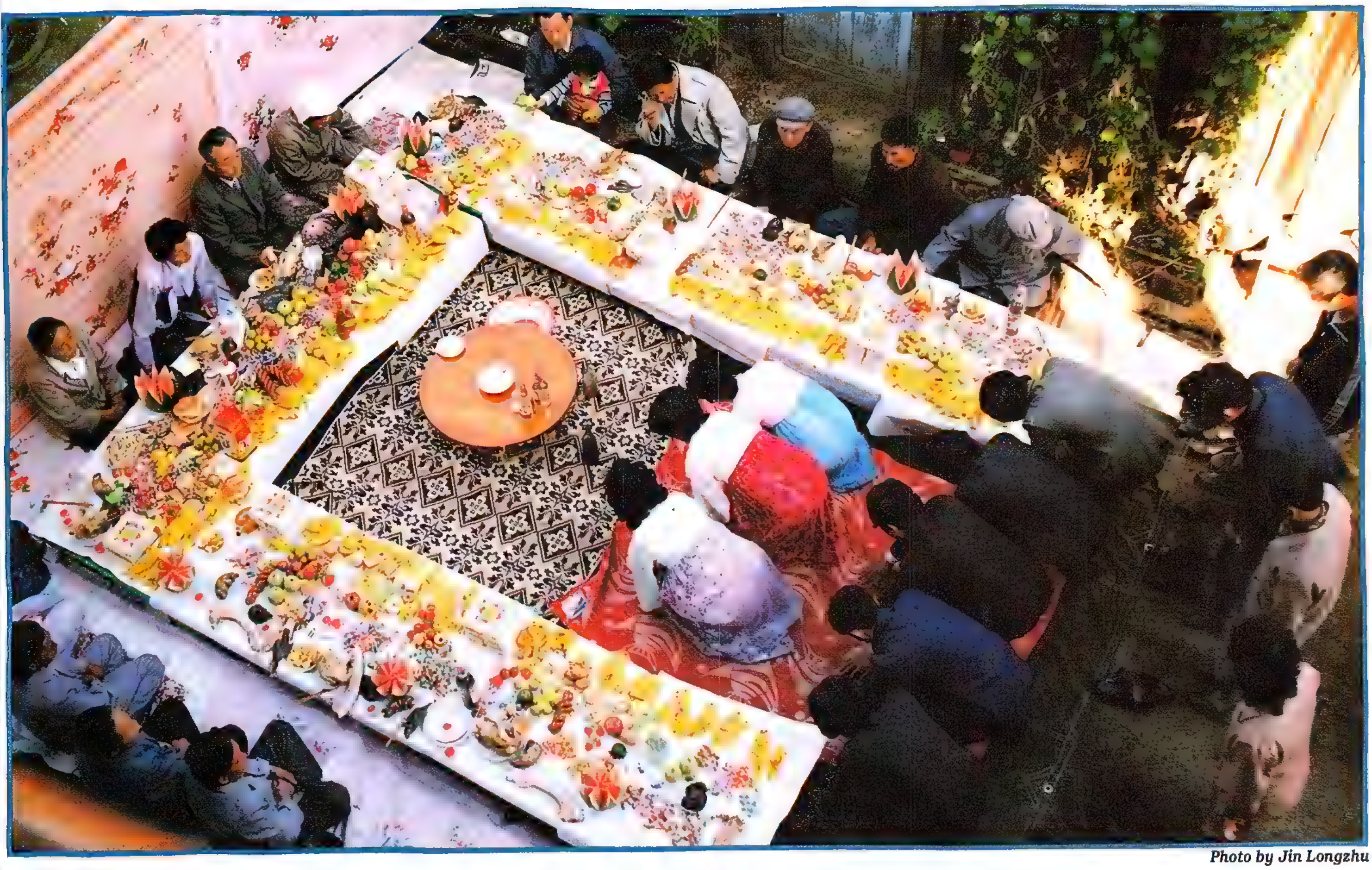


Photo by Jin Longzhu

◁ Among the Koreans, dancing and drinking invariably go hand in hand. It is their proud boast that they only start to dance when they are tipsy, since their lowered inhibitions mean that they can dance all the better. The local brew is drunk from large bronze bowls, a relic from the past.

△ At the age of sixty, a Korean is said to have reached the watershed of his or her life. Regarded with great respect, they are henceforth considered living 'gods of longevity'. The fifteenth day of the eighth lunar month is set aside every year in Yanbian for the Old Peoples' Festival. Their sons and daughters organize a banquet which is attended by relatives and fellow villagers who kneel to extend their congratulations and offer gifts in an order based on position in the family, rank and lineage. Dancing and drinking with the assembled guests, the respected elders are often quite tipsy by the time the party breaks up!

The red-crowned crane is ▷ revered by Koreans — as by the Chinese and Japanese — since it symbolizes longevity and good luck. A Crane Dance was performed at the Korean court in olden times and was still very popular in Antu County at the end of the 1920s. In its present-day version, the dance is performed by dancers clothed in ingenious crane costumes made of gauze. The dancers sway their necks from side to side and stare at the sky, just like cranes do when they are preparing to take flight.

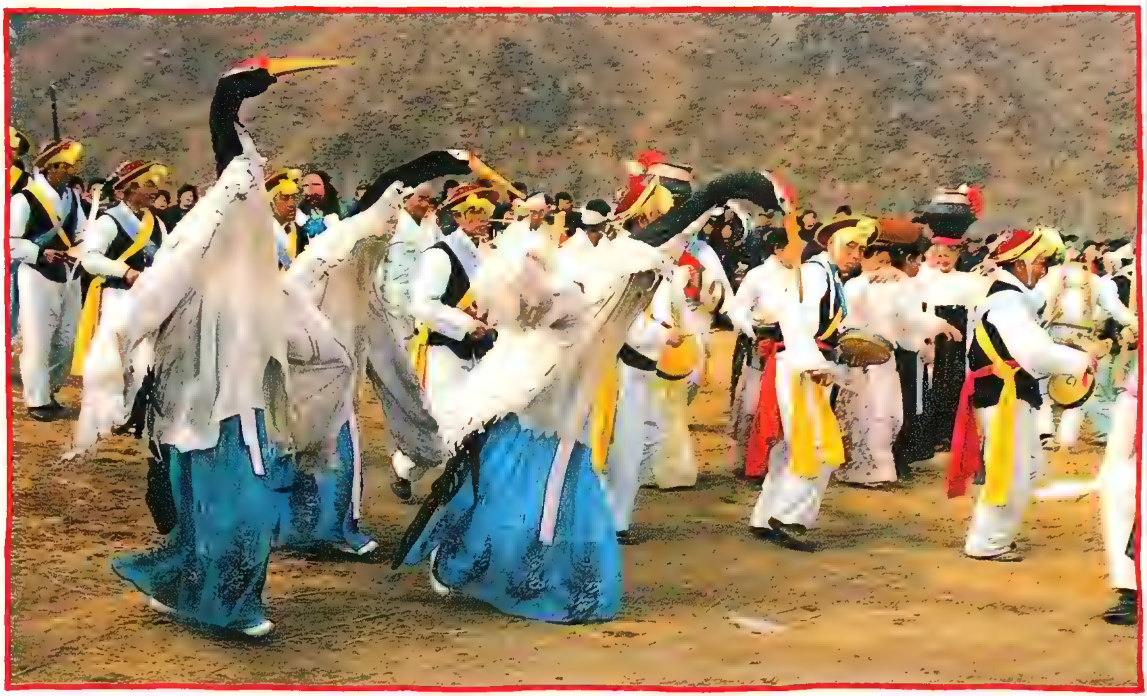
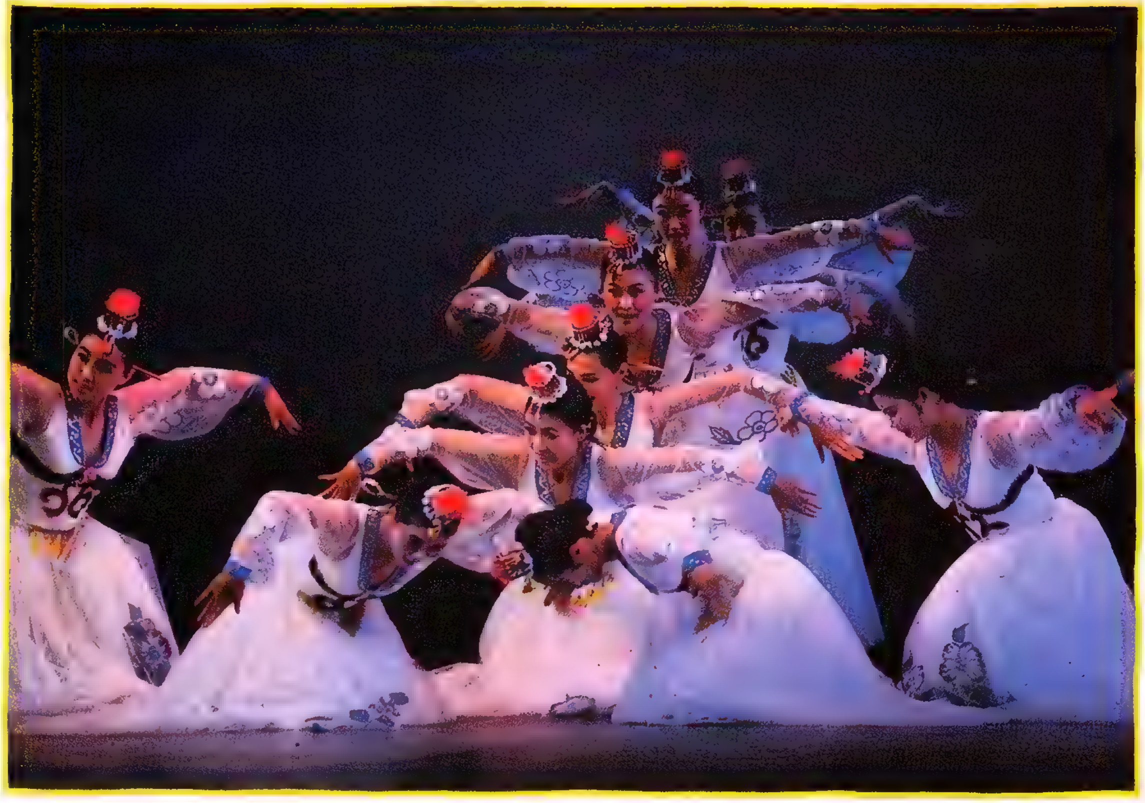


Photo by Huang Fansong



△
Koreans have the reputation of being neat and elegant dressers. Young dancers in white robes with sleeves as thin as a cicada's wing perform to traditional music, grouping and regrouping into graceful poses and patterns evoking the movements of birds.

On the fifteenth day of the first lunar month (February by the Gregorian calendar), a grand tug of war is staged for adults and children alike.

The entire village takes part, the teams wearing traditional dress. Some of them are masked, and each team leader carries a banner, usually embroidered with an animal such as a tiger or lion, to vaunt their strength and courage.

Immense ropes are woven from straw gathered from every household. There are 'male' and 'female' ropes. A team with a 'male' rope inserts it into the circle at the end of the 'female' rope and a big wooden clasp holds them firmly in place. The ropes for the children's tug of war are afterwards used to strengthen the adults' ropes, so that the finished rope may be fifty to sixty centimetres in diameter and forty metres long. ▽

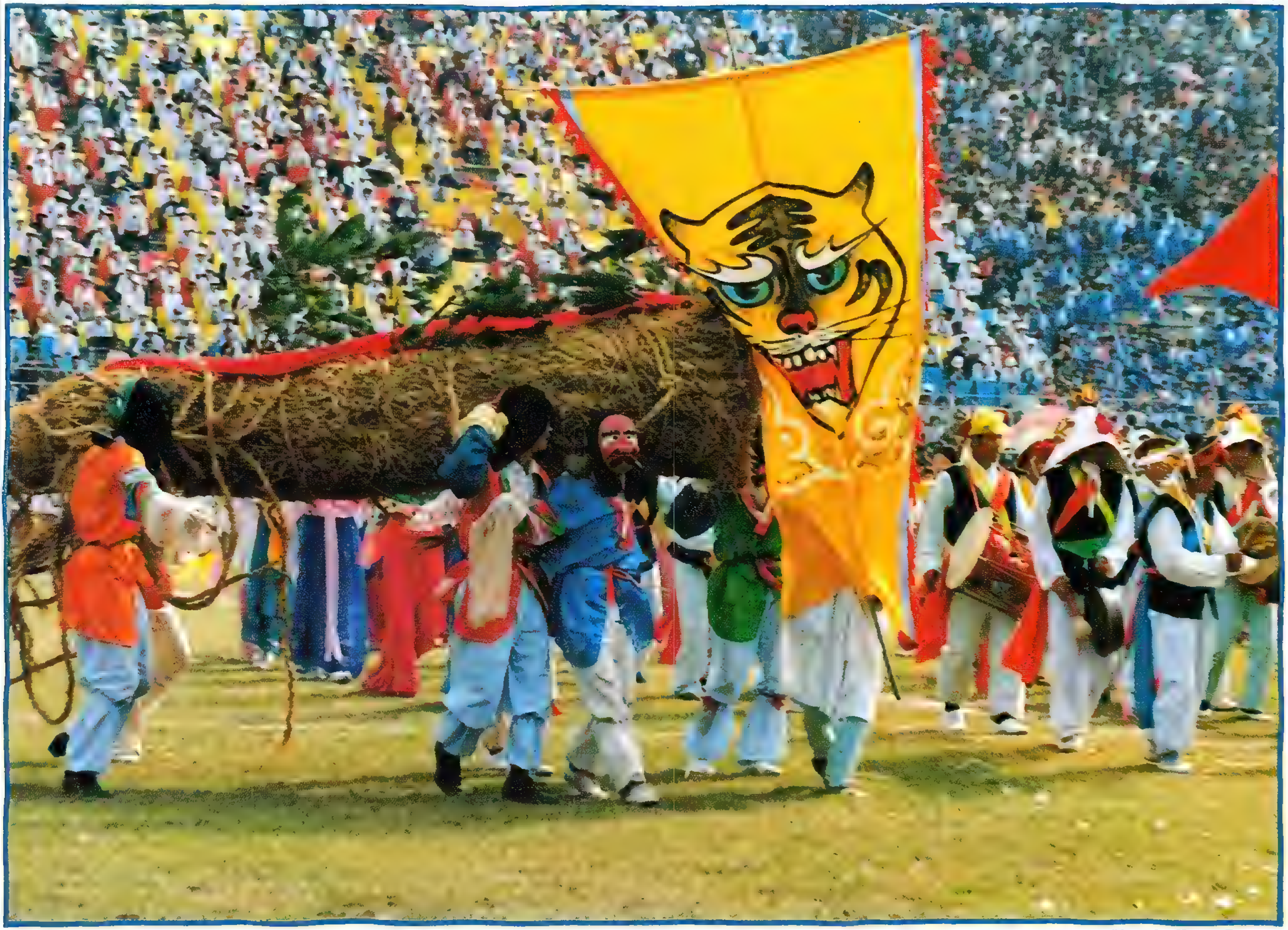


Photo by Huang Fansong

One of the most famous Korean dances is the ▷ Farmers' Dance, held to celebrate the harvest. The dancers — men or boys — wear round caps with long, colourful silk streamers attached to the crown which they twirl around most skilfully to match the changing beat of the drums. As the dancer's head moves, the flowing ribbons, which can be scores of metres long (even those for children are at least a metre long), dance and gyrate. This unique dance requires great skill from the performers, as well as astonishing energy and exuberance.

Translated by He Fei

Photo by Yin Tongchun

JILIN SPECIAL

The Potent, Enigmatic Ginseng

PHOTOS BY CHAN YAT NIN
ARTICLE BY ZI YAN

1

Many Chinese swear by ginseng. The Chinese name *renshen* – literally 'man root' – is derived from its fancied resemblance to the human form. In legend, the ginseng appears in various human guises: as a chubby small boy, as a woman warrior defending people against injustice like a female Robin Hood, as a pretty girl who falls in love with a young man in the mountains.... It was believed that the juice from a thousand-year-old ginseng was the 'elixir of life' so assiduously sought by the Taoists. Anyone who took a few drops of this elixir would become immortal.

All this background of myth and legend adds an even more mysterious slant to the ginseng. In this context we are talking about the Oriental ginseng (*Panax ginseng*), which grows naturally in northeastern China and Korea, and is also grown in Japan and Siberia. There is another type, the American ginseng (*Panax qinquefolius*), which is native to the United States and Canada. This too is imported and has its uses in traditional Chinese medicine, since its properties are very different from those of the Oriental ginseng.

Both plants consist of a stem from which the leaves spring, a central root and two branch roots. The roots have rings on them which are an indication of age. The older the ginseng, the more it is prized for its properties, the price depending on age, source, whether it is wild or cultivated, the part of the root used, etc.

In *Shennong's Classic of Herbology*, compiled during the Han dynasty (206 B.C.–A.D. 220), ginseng is listed as a non-toxic herb. At that time, ginseng was already considered to 'vitalize the five organs, calm the nerves, stop palpitations due to fright, brighten vision, increase the intellect and, with long-term use, prolong life and make one feel young'. Much the same is claimed for it today.

Soviet scientists who have conducted research into the ginseng in recent years have coined the term 'adaptogen' as the best way to describe its properties. This is defined as a substance which can increase the

body's resistance to outside stresses of various types without making it deviate to any extent from its normal functions, normalizing the physiological performance as a whole. Nowadays, ginseng is taken in the form of tablets, capsules, liquid extracts or powder, or chewed to extract the juice. It is used as a general tonic, sedative and aphrodisiac (although with less emphasis on the latter than many in the West believe!).

Since the Changbai Mountains in Jilin are one of China's main ginseng-cultivating areas, I was eager to

Cultivated ginseng is whiter and bigger than wild ginseng (1, by Zhang Qi). It is grown in large plots shaded by awnings (2 and 3).

2

3

look into this aspect while I was travelling in the region. From Tonghua, I took a train to Songjianghe and changed to a bus which took me to Fusong. This town is located on the upper reaches of the river of the same name northwest of the Changbai Mountains.

As we approached Fusong, we were enveloped on either side by a thick, seemingly endless forest. Through the trees I caught sight of something shimmering, rather like a large piece of crystal laid against a green carpet. This was a ginseng farm, I was told. Ginseng grows naturally in the depths of the forest and has to be shielded from direct sunlight when it is cultivated artificially. So one-metre-high plastic awnings are erected in neat rows to protect the precious plants. This is a new development, of course. The traditional coverings are made of reeds and twigs.

The bus took us to the Number One Ginseng Farm, the largest in Fusong County. Here too the woodlands were dense. The gentleman who welcomed us explained that this farm is set in the foothills of the Changbai Mountains.

He led us through the woods to see the ginseng fields, through a world of green gloom, almost subterranean in feel. Ancient pine trees and other species towered above smaller trees and shrubs under which all kinds of flowers were dappled by the sunlight.

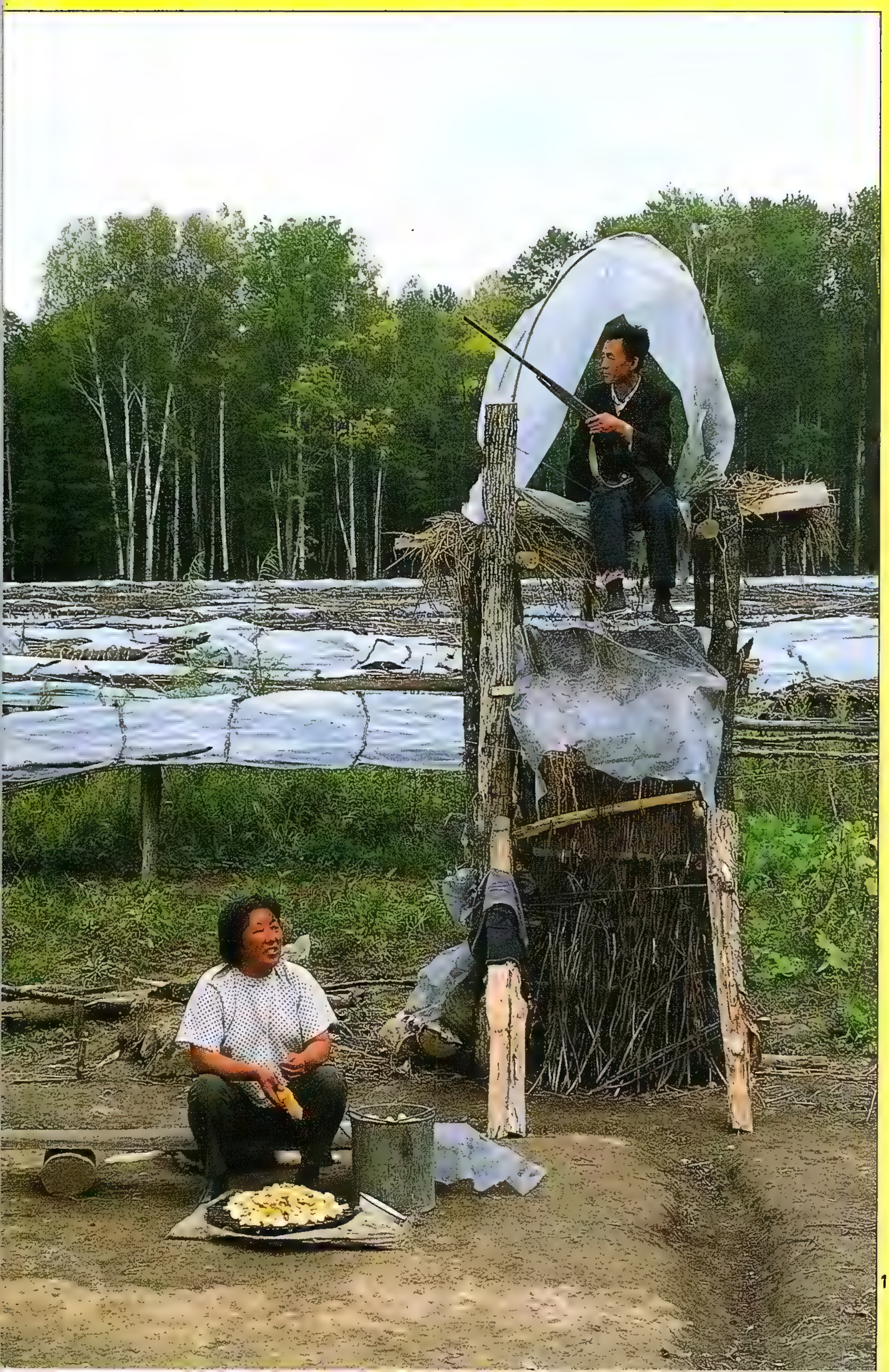
From the quiet of the woods we emerged, all of a sudden, onto a flat area with more ginseng beds. Each plot was from around six to several scores of hectares in area and they were separated by rows of trees.

I approached one plot and saw a few female workers brandishing their hoes. I was told that they were digging up ginseng. I gaped open-mouthed to see the rough and ready way in which they were approaching their task, since I had always understood that you needed to handle ginseng with kid gloves, so to speak. They all roared with laughter at my innocence as they explained that it was impossible to dig out cultivated ginseng, called *yuanshen*, individually. It is true, however, that wild ginseng — which has incomparably better nutritional and medicinal properties — is handled with extreme care.

2

I picked up a ginseng and took a close look. It was plump and very thick at the top. Since the Changbai Mountains are volcanic, the soil here is rich in nutrients and minerals from the volcanic ash. Besides, the unpolluted forest, cool and damp, provides endless nourishment from its soil. All this means ideal conditions for ginseng-growing.

As we moved on, we passed a thatched shed where a man was sitting, fowling-piece in hand. De-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spite his rather serious demeanour, I engaged him in conversation. He told me that every plot employs a guard to protect the ginseng from damage by animals, birds and humans.

This guard – who turned out to be a real mine of information – explained to me that ginseng takes six or seven years to mature. You need good fertile land on which to start the young shoots. Only when they sprout are they transferred to the ginseng beds. Since ginseng guzzles every particle of nutrients in the soil, it has to be transplanted after three years. The original bed then needs to lie fallow for at least a couple of years to recover. June, July and August are considered the best months for digging up the roots. The farmers first pull down the awnings, then ferret out the ginseng, which is sent for grading and processing in local workshops. Generally speaking, white ginseng (*baishen*) can be dried straight away, but red ginseng (*hongshen*) needs to be steamed in a big cauldron before being dried and despatched to market.

As I mentioned earlier, wild ginseng is highly prized and can demand an astronomical price. However, I noted in the ginseng farm's exhibition room that even a large cultivated ginseng costs only a couple of yuan. An old wild one of the same size might well cost 10,000 yuan; the older, the more expensive. I was told that, only a month previously, four local farmers had dug up a 500-year-old wild ginseng weighing 470 grams – reportedly worth 350,000 yuan! This might sound like an easy way to make money, but it only happens once in a blue moon. Most people who go out searching for wild ginseng return empty-handed.

A veteran ginseng farmer gave me some tips on how to recognize a wild ginseng. The top of the ginseng has many 'eyes' from which the roots sprout. A ginseng only grows one 'eye' a year. The fibrous roots are well developed. A wild ginseng several decades old may be smaller than a cultivated ginseng only a few years old, yet the amount of nutrition it has packed into it is totally beyond compare. This is why the wild ones are so much more expensive. I started to understand why so many people take to the mountains for the whole of the summer (in other words, June to August) with the intention of hunting for wild ginseng. Their task is made easier by the fact that the ginseng seeds are bright red for much of this period.

Translated by Wang Mingjie

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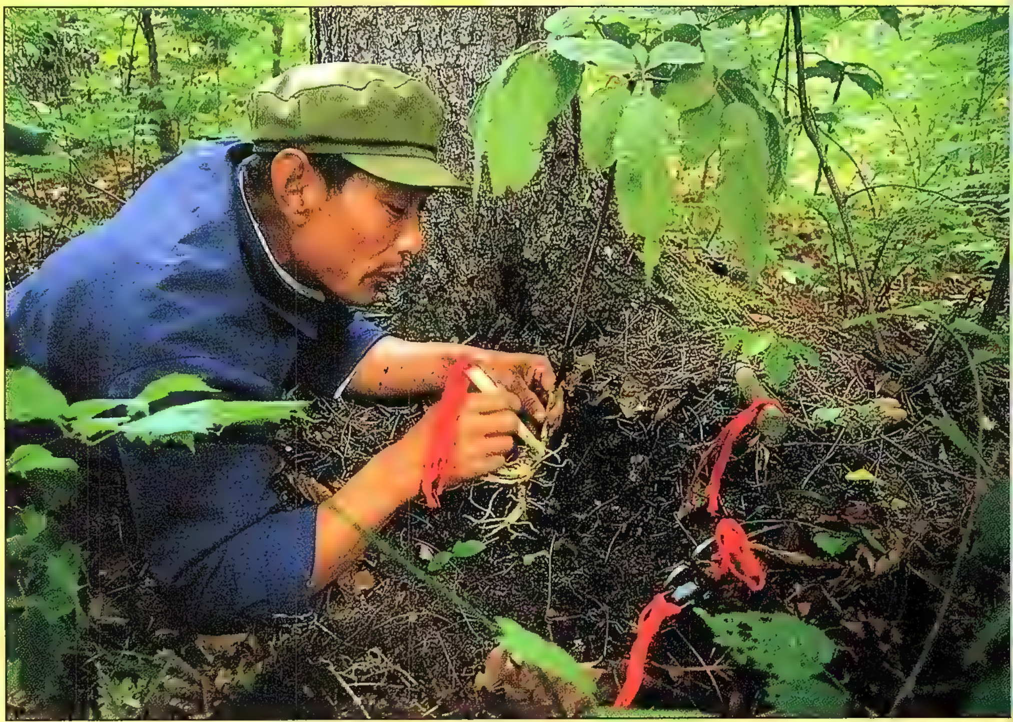

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3

The 'Tomb of the Master' near Tonghua (2). A hunter of wild ginseng extricates his precious find from the soil with great care, using a deer-bone needle (5). Guarded against animal, bird and human pests as it grows (1), cultivated ginseng is graded and processed (3, by Zhang Qi), which for the hongshen *includes steaming (4).*

JILIN SPECIAL

Home of the Sika Deer

PHOTOS BY ZHAO BING
TEXT BY SU REN

Certain districts in Jilin Province are famous for their deer population. Such is the case with Dongfeng County and Shuangyang County in southwest and central Jilin, respectively. The latter county is blessed by green hills and by the River Shuangyang which traverses it. For around 150 years now, deer – and specifically sika deer – have been domesticated and bred here. Currently, there are more than 3,400 sika deer in the county.

This deer, which is closely related to the red deer, is native to northeastern China and Japan, but is also found in southern and southwestern China and has been successfully introduced in many other parts of the world. It looks rather like a small red deer; its body length is about 1.5 metres. Its horns grow to almost one metre long and are particularly valued.

I paid a visit to a settlement known simply as Luxiang (Deer Village) to experience this aspect of Jilin's rural life. The deer are kept in pens which are swept out every morning early; the pens are paved with brick for easy maintenance and to protect the deer against foot rot. The deer are fed three times a day at fixed times, although the fawns are treated as special cases and given bottles of milk as required (with plenty of pats on the side).

The relationship between the deer and their keepers is close. After all, they live more or less in one another's pockets – the windows of the village houses open on to the deer pens. When you walk among the deer, they flock around you, obviously expecting food or tidbits. The minus point of all this closeness, for an outsider, is that the village houses are permeated with deer smell ... although this is no doubt perfume to the inhabitants!

The deer is believed to live to a very great age, which is why it is a symbol of longevity in China. And, since the word for deer, *lu*, is a homonym of the word meaning an official's salary, it also stands for wealth and glory. My village host told me that, as far as he was concerned, each deer was truly a treasure chest in itself, since so much of it is prized and can be utilized at a profit. The pilose antlers, foetus, male reproductive organs, tail, tendons, gallbladder and blood are all used in some form in traditional Chinese medicine (one super-strength general tonic calls for deer's tail and ginseng in brandy). And, of course, venison is highly nutritious and delicious to eat, while the sika's hide is beautifully patterned.

Sika deer (2) provide a livelihood for many rural communities in Jilin (1, by Yin Tongchun).

1

2

A male deer begins to sprout horns from its second year, growing an extra fork every year. At the age of five, when it has four forks, the antlers stop growing. An adult stag takes great care of his antlers, holding his head high to balance their weight and, when he runs, tucking them back on his neck out of harm's way. The best-quality antlers are taken from stags of between four and nine years old. Their antlers may be 'harvested' more than ten times during this period. In fact, antlers grow very rapidly and can be removed again after only a couple of months.

Although not painless, the process of removing the antlers is relatively simple. A few strong men hold the stag firmly and tie it to a stout wooden post, muzzling it with an iron ring. The antler is then sawn off. Afterwards, wheat flour is spread on the wound to help it heal. The whole process takes only a few minutes.

Since a stag sheds its antlers every year anyway, you may ask why it is necessary to saw them off. The fact is that, for the purposes of Chinese medicine, the horn must be taken from the living animal for optimum efficacy and nutritious qualities, often when still 'in velvet'.

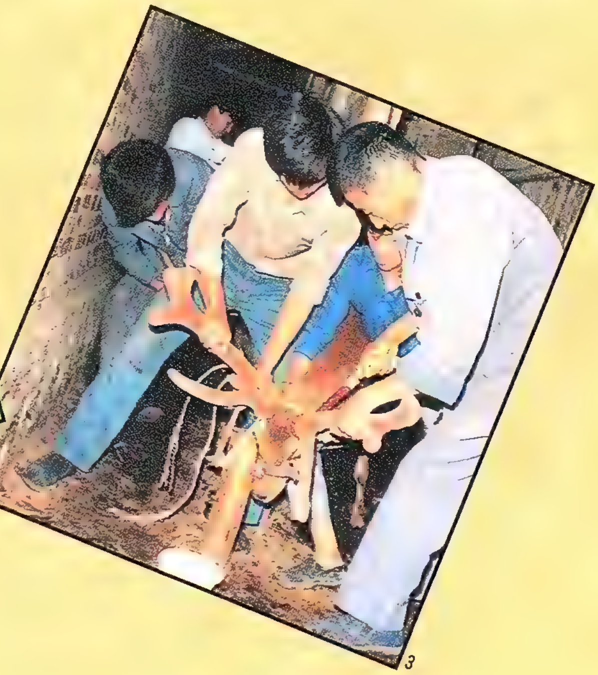
The horn is cut into slices, powdered, or made up into pills and decoctions. Inferior horn may be boiled into a jelly. The very expensive results are said to be stimulant, tonic, astringent and — most famously — aphrodisiac in nature. Powdered deer horn (like rhinoceros horn) has traditionally been taken by Chinese men to improve virility and sexual performance.

Translated by Wang Mingjie

The deer are tame (1), practically members of the family (2, by Zhang Qi), but stags must submit to the frequent removal of their antlers (3).

1

2



3

Changbai Legends in Papercuts

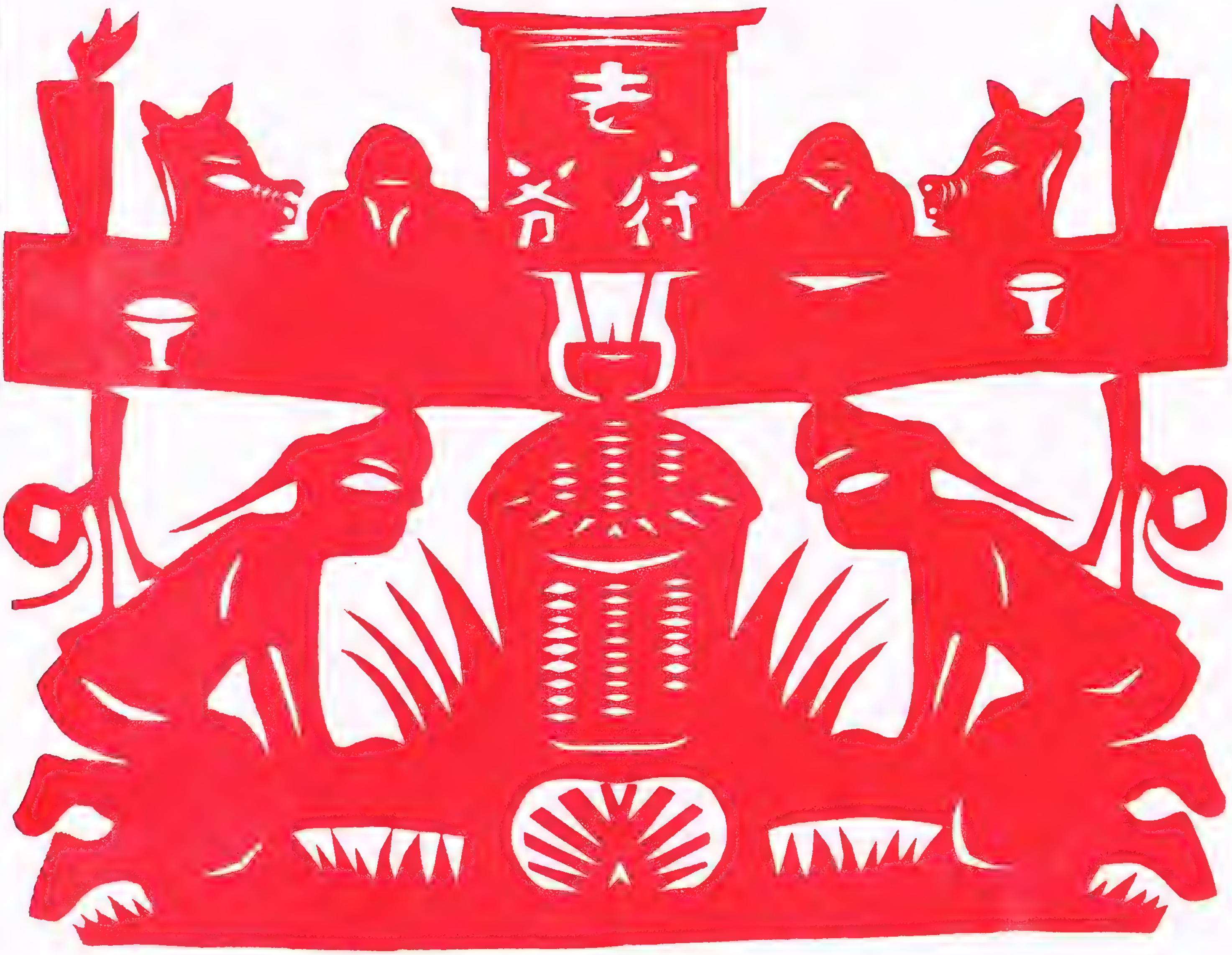
PHOTOS BY CHAN YAT NIN
TEXT BY HUA NIAN

The foothills of the Changbai Mountains have long sheltered communities of Koreans and Manchus who both rejoice in a wealth of legends.

One talented Manchu woman has made no less than a thousand papercuts illustrating local legends. When asked why she chooses to spend her time doing this, she replies: 'I just do it for fun!' The lines of the fascinating pieces she creates out of her own fertile imagination are simple yet vigorous. Despite the lack of fiddly detail, the uncluttered approach, the resulting papercut evokes the true spirit of the legend.

Paying Homage to the Ginseng Master

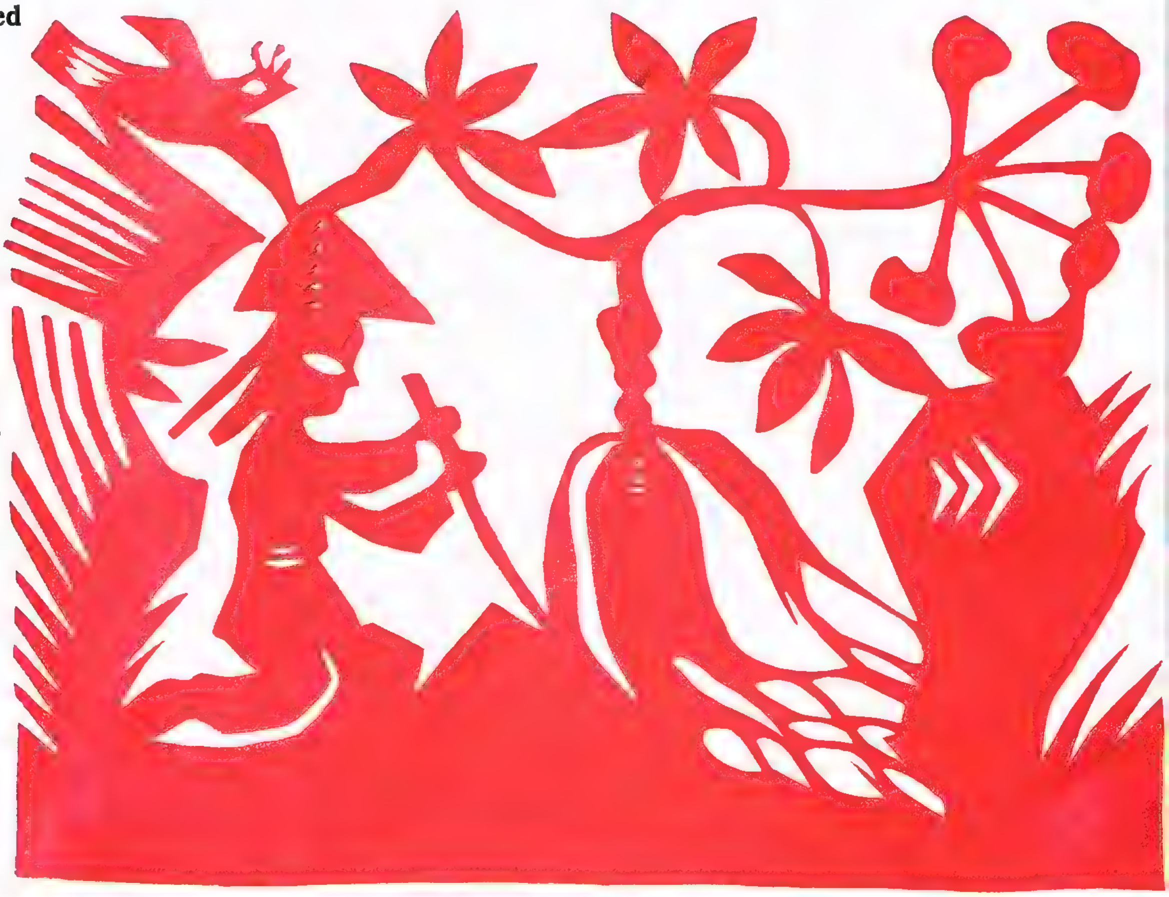
Before and after searching for ginseng on the mountain slopes, it is the custom to pay homage to the legendary ginseng-searching master. This symmetrically composed papercut presents such a scene. The round Chinese coins with a square hole and a thread attached seen on either side of the altar are for tying up the ginseng so that it cannot run away. The offerings — pig's heads, fruit and wine — indicate the depth of the devotees' respect.

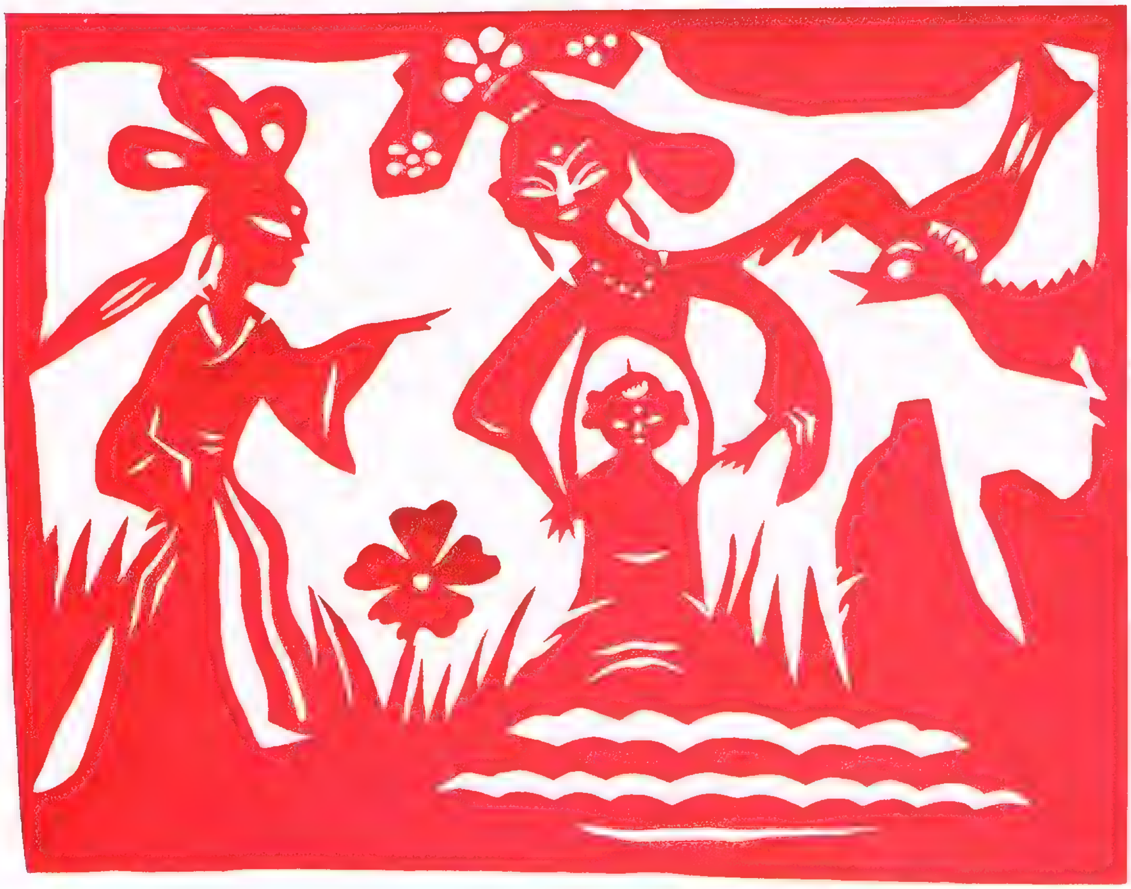


Ginseng Search Rewarded

This papercut depicts Sun Liang, the legendary ginseng-searching master. It is said that he came to the Changbai Mountains from the Central Plains in search of ginseng, overcoming all kinds of hardships on his way. By the time he reached the River Lagu (Mole Cricket), he had not eaten for three whole days. In his hunger, he was forced to eat some crickets. The Ginseng God was moved by his tenacity in his search and permitted him to find a ginseng.

The enormous ginseng in the centre of the papercut forms the focus of the composition. Sun Liang and the ginseng seeds and leaves are vividly executed while the ground and other background elements are merely suggested. The overall effect is of concentrated action as Sun Liang makes his momentous discovery.



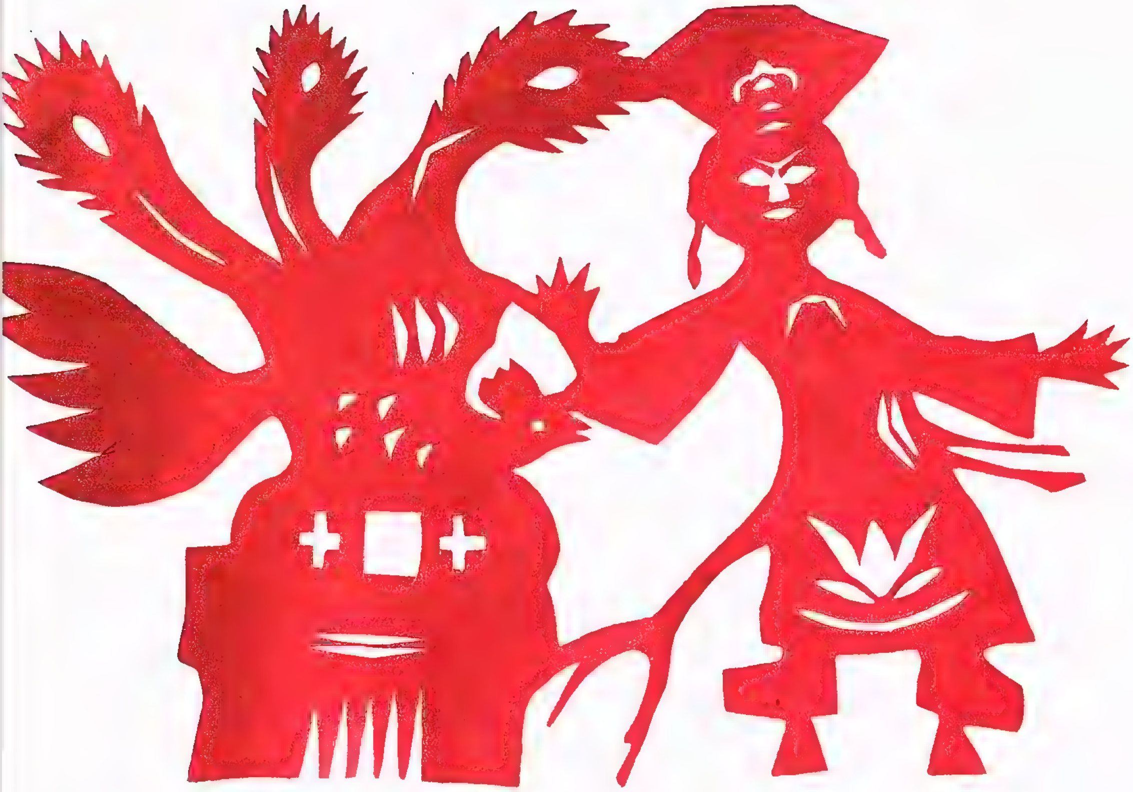


Ancestor of the Manchus

The Changbai Mountains are said to have been sacred to the Manchus since their ancestor was born here. The charming legend about this is illustrated in this papercut.

Once upon a time, three fairies lived beside the waters of Lake Bu'er (present-day Yuanchi). One day, a magic magpie flew over, carrying a beautiful berry in its beak. It dropped the berry, which was picked up and eaten by the third fairy, who thereupon became pregnant. She gave birth to a boy, strong and good-looking, who was able to speak as soon as he was born. He was named Aisin-Gioro, and was the first ancestor of the Manchus. Aisin-Gioro was the clan name of all the Qing emperors, who were of course Manchus.

The papercut depicts the boy in or just emerging from the fairy's womb. The clever composition even finds room for the jubilant magpie.



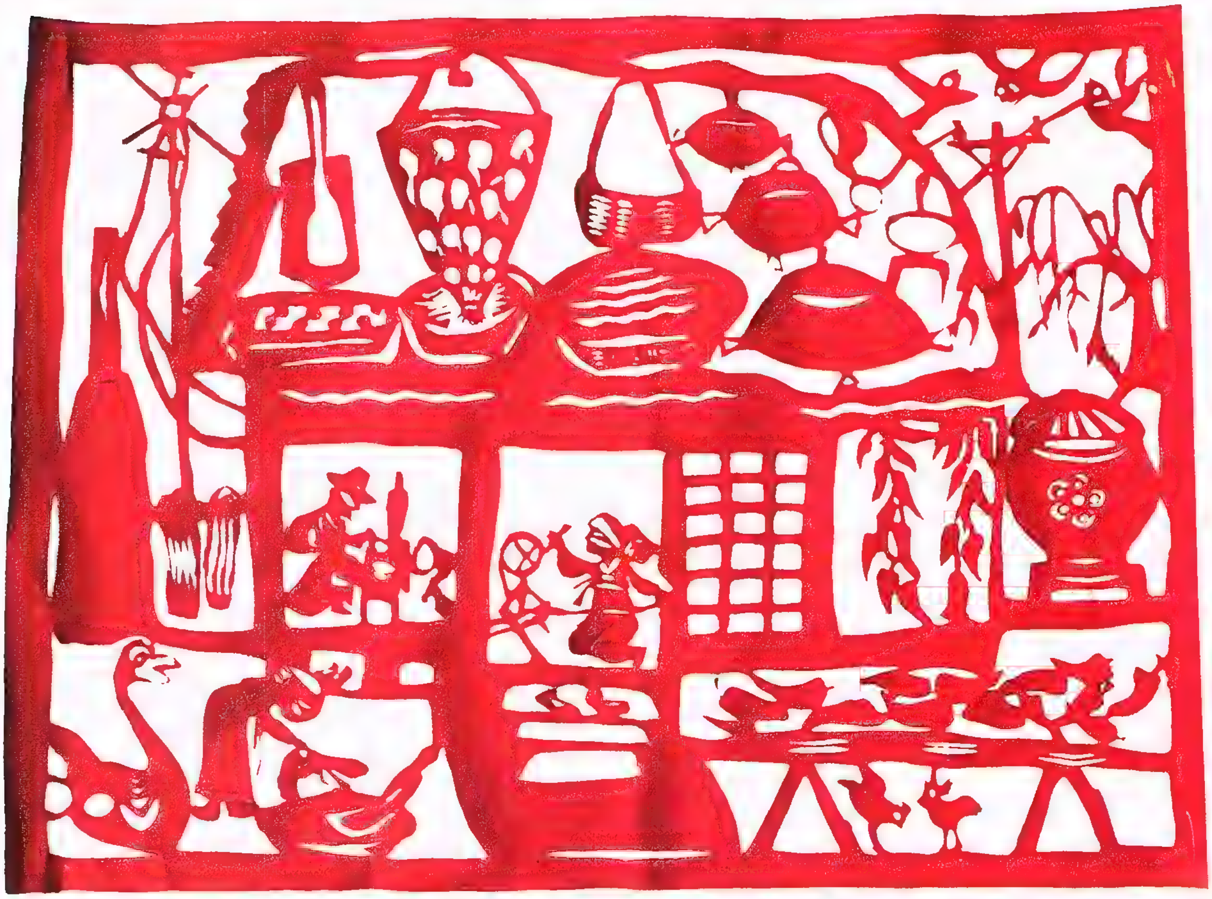
A Pheasant in the Pot

A local folksong praises the rich natural resources of the Changbai Mountains; it says that there are so many birds and animals living here that, if you lift the lid off a cooking pot, a pheasant will fly straight in of its own accord.

In this papercut version, the pheasant looks rather like the legendary phoenix. The Manchu woman in her traditional dress appears to be surprised but pleased by the sudden arrival of the pheasant — as well she might! Her tall headdress and high-heeled pattens are details which give an authentic, if archaic, touch.

Home in the Country

Depicting the happy — if idealized — scene of a Korean household in the countryside, this work is highly detailed yet well organized. In the house in the centre, a man smokes a pipe at his ease as a woman spins busily. The outer walls of the house are hung with all kinds of crops, shown exaggeratedly large — perhaps to emphasize their importance to the family's well-being and prosperity. On the left-hand side of the picture, we also see a tall chimney, one of the features of traditional Korean architecture.



Translated by Wang Mingjie

A Taste of Korea in China

PHOTOS BY CHAN YAT NIN TEXT BY HU WEI

In the Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture, rice is the dietary staple instead of steamed bread, which is the common staple for most inhabitants of northern China. Boiled, strained, then steamed, Korean rice is eaten with a bowl of soup containing wild vegetables, cabbage and thinly sliced radish in a thick soy sauce.

The secondary staple is cold noodles. When eaten in winter, cold noodles generate warmth in the body. In summer, tasty and refreshing, they act as an appetite stimulant.

Like the Cantonese of China's far south, Koreans like to eat dog meat. Boiled and chopped into small pieces, it is accompanied by a bowl of soup made from the same meat. Because it is eaten hot and makes you sweat, Koreans feel that dog meat relieves the sensation of heat when eaten in the summer (this is in complete contrast to the Cantonese practice; there they eat dog meat in winter since it is thought to be a 'hot' or 'heating' food according to the traditional Chinese classification).

The Koreans have a long history of eating pickled vegetables. *Kimchi* is an essential item of the diet. This ubiquitous food is prepared in every household and is eaten in large quantities, especially during the winter. The raw materials are cabbage, radish, cucumber, eggplant, rutabaga or swede, and green onions. Sweet and sour, this is one dish you either love or hate, and Koreans love it!

Korean confectionery is usually made of glutinous rice flour. *Dagao* and steamed cakes, among others, are semi-transparent and are sliced into small pieces with a knife. Served coated with roasted rice flour, they are soft in texture and slip down easily, rather like the Western jelly.

Yanbian's festivals are enlivened by coloured cakes called *seguozi* in the shape of plants and animals. Hard and crunchy, these are highly popular with children and are sold in complete sets at the market; you cannot buy them by the piece.

Last but not least of the local specialities is blood sausage. This traditional snack is easy to make. A sausage casing is filled with a mixture of pig's blood and glutinous rice. The sausage is then cut into slices for serving.

Translated by He Fei

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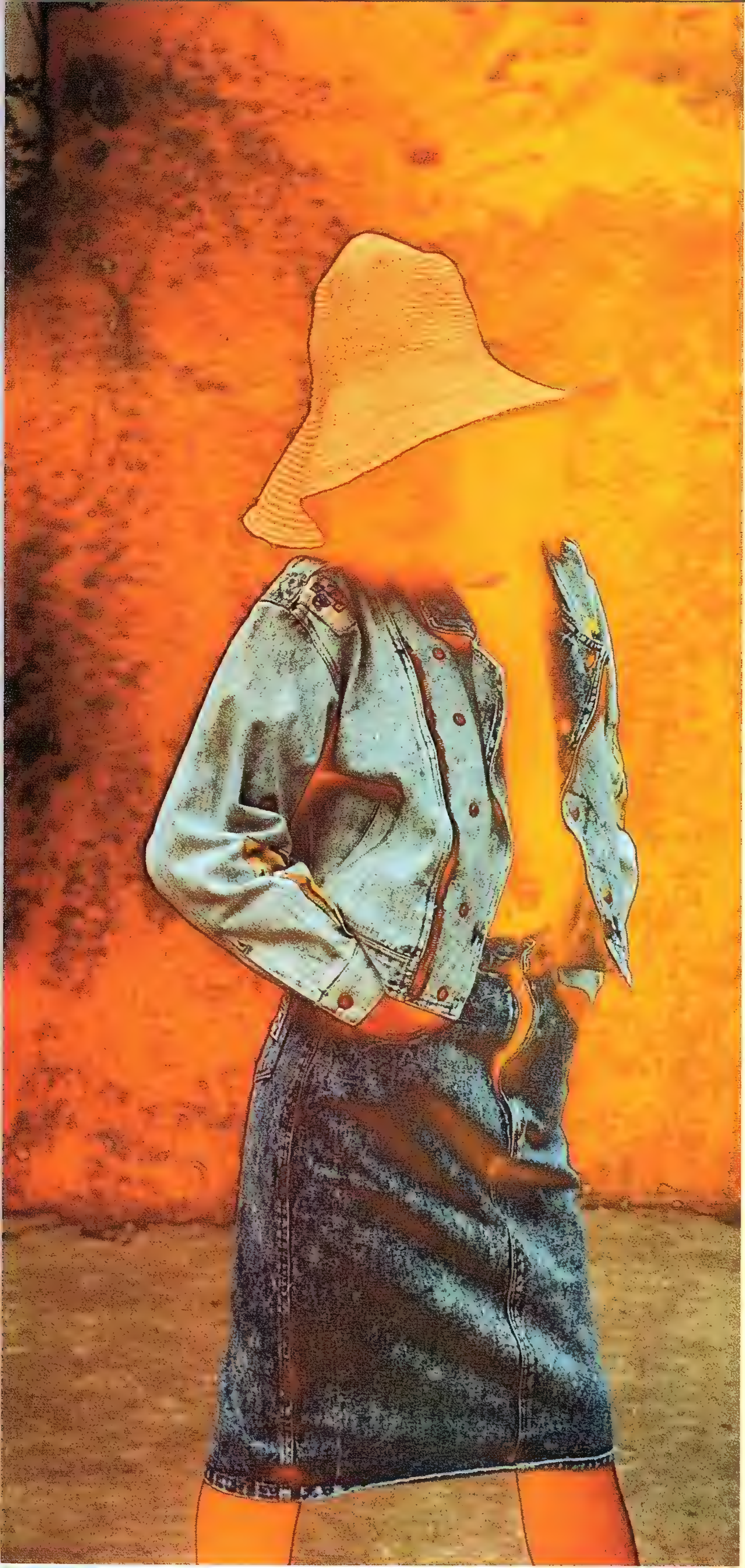

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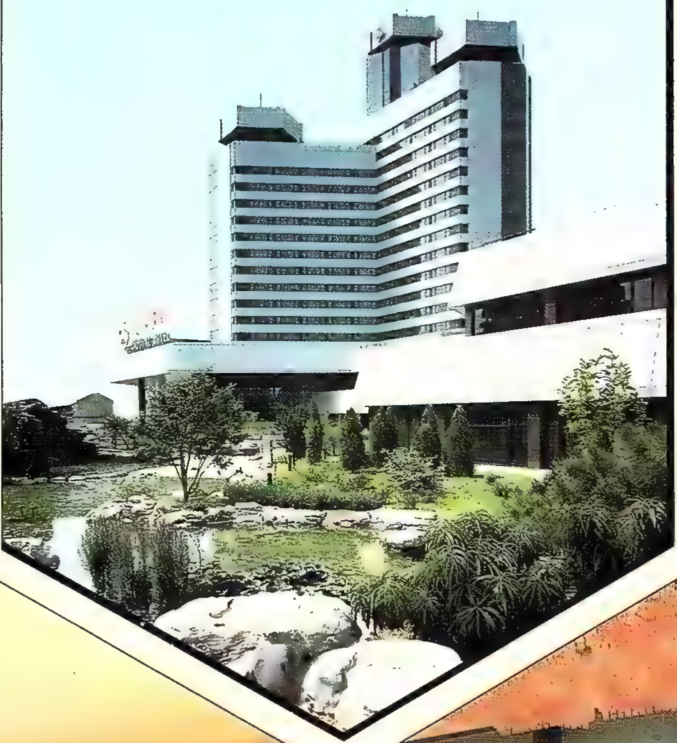

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86–88, WANG FU JING STREET, BEIJING, CHINA
TEL: 55·5380 55·2610

CHROMIC ACID

FORMULA: $CrO3$

MOL WT: 99.99

PROPERTIES: DARK, BROWNISH-RED GRANULES REPIDLY DELIQUESCENT, MELTS AT ABOUT 196°C, SOLUBLE IN WATER. WHEN BROUGHT IN CONTACT WITH ORGANIC SUBSTANCES DECOMPOSITION TAKES PLACE, SOMETIMES WITH DANGEROUS VIOLENCE.

STANDARDS: ASSAY ($CrO3$)........................99.6%
CHLORIDE (Cl)......................0.005%
SULFATE ($SO4$)..........................0.1%
INSOLUBILITY.........................0.05%

USE: CHROMIUM PLATING; ELECTRIC BATTERIES; PHOTOGRAPHY; PURITYING OILS AND ACETYLENE; ETCHING COPPER; MEDICAMENT, METALLURGY. ORGANIC SYNTHESIS, OXIDIZER, PIGMENT.

PACKING: ON 50 KG IRON DRUM

銘　　酸

分子式：CrO_3

分子量：99.99

性狀：褐色、紅棕色片狀固體，極易潮。熔點：196°C，溶於水，接觸有機物則分解激烈，有危險。

標準：含量（CrO_3）..................................99.6%
氯化物（Cl）..................................0.005%
硫酸鹽（SO_4）..................................0.1%
不溶解物..................................0.05%

用途：鍍鉻、電池、照像、乙炔和石油的精製，浸蝕銅、醫藥、冶金、有機合成、氧化劑、顏料。

包裝：50KG鐵桶。

铬 酸 99.5%
CHROMIC ACID 99.5%
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CHROMIC ACID 99.5%

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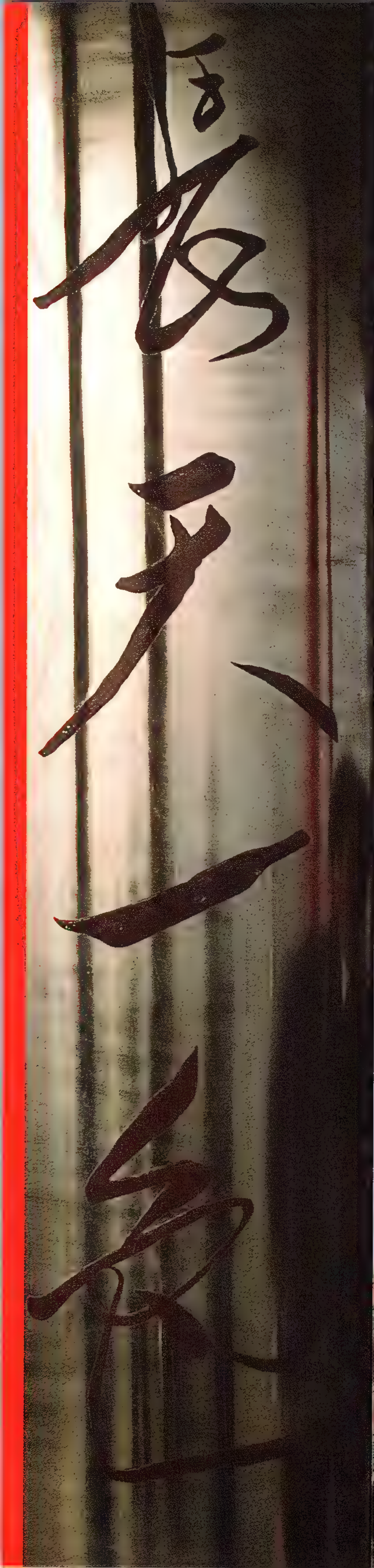
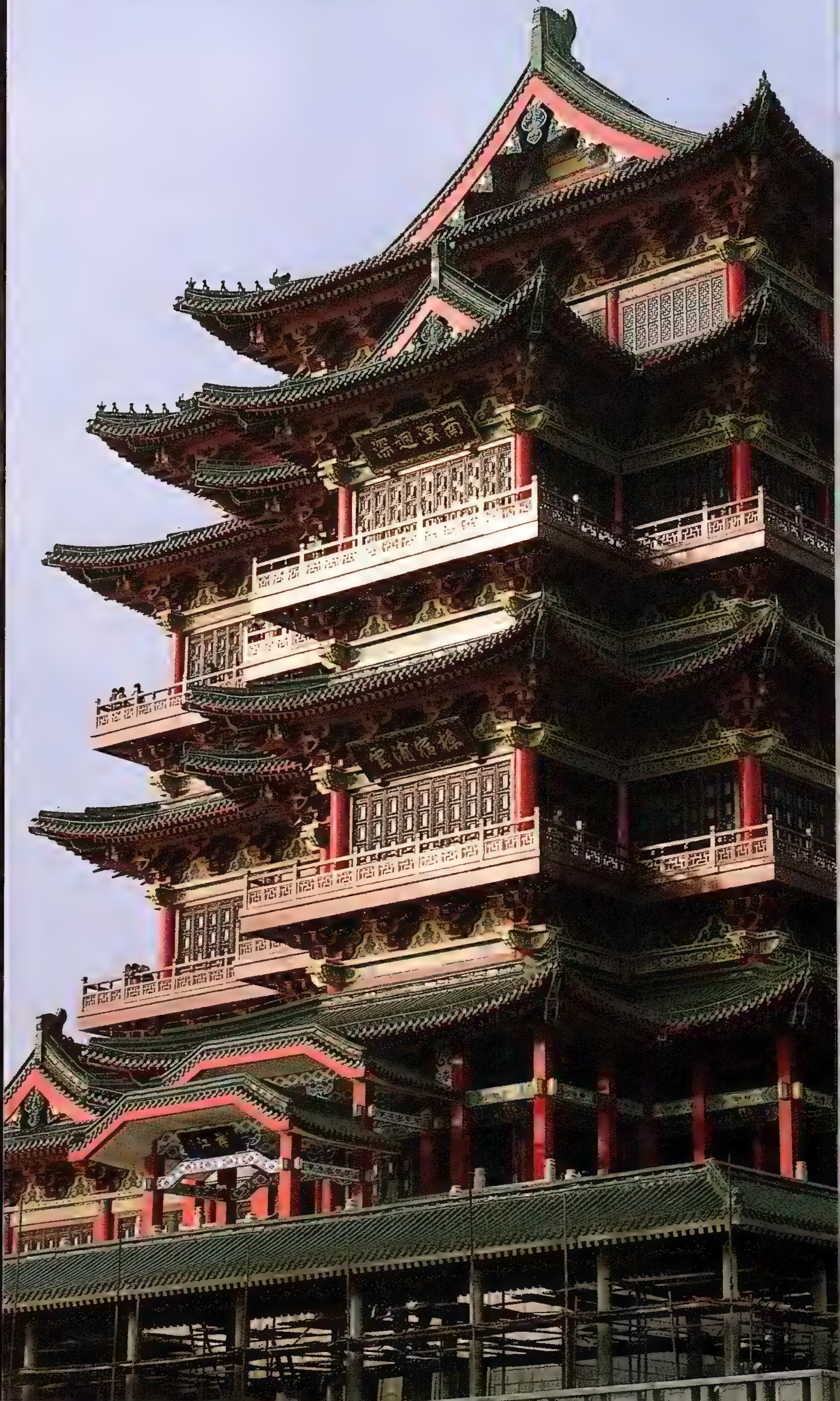


The Tengwang Tower Rises Again

PHOTOS BY TAI CHI YIN ARTICLE BY JIAN FENG



It was autumn when I arrived in Nanchang, capital of Jiangxi Province. I saw golden leaves scattered on the ground everywhere and the Tengwang Tower, one of China's most famous ancient towers, rising high above the bank of the River Ganjiang. This tower, the Yueyang Pavilion by Lake Dongting and the Huanghe (Yellow Crane) Tower in Wuhan, Hubei Province, have long been referred to as the 'Three Famous Towers in the South of the Yangtse Valley'. The Yueyang Pavilion underwent heavy repairs several years ago and the Yellow Crane Tower was rebuilt a couple of years back, while rebuilding of the Tengwang Tower started in 1983, being completed only in 1989. As a consequence, when I first saw the tower, I felt it was magnificent but regrettably a bit too 'new'.

Records show that the original tower was built over 1,300 years ago in 653 during the Tang dynasty by the then prefectural governor of Hongzhou (present-day Nanchang), Li Yuanying, the son of Emperor Gaozu (reign dates 618-626). When Li was given the title Prince Teng (Tengwang), the tower at his residence was named accordingly. Given Hongzhou's strategic importance and thus exposure to war, and the tower's location on the riverbank and its susceptibility to fire (it was built of wood), it is not really so surprising that the tower has frequently been destroyed, the last time in 1926 when it was burnt down during a battle.

Prince Teng did not contribute much to court life, giving himself up to luxury and pleasure, which is why he was sent to Hongzhou. Yet he was a highly reputed artist, famous particularly for his paintings of bees and butterflies. Practically the only contribution he made in Hongzhou, too, was the construction of this tower as a gathering place for men of letters and refined persons. Songs and dances were also performed in the tower which developed into something like a cultural *salon* of the Tang dynasty. Teng Zijing, who rebuilt the Yueyang Pavilion beside Lake Dongting in 1045 during the Song dynasty, once mentioned the building of the Tengwang Tower as the most important contribution made by Prince Teng during his lifetime.

2

Most of China's famous towers and pavilions were erected in scenic spots. These were not religious structures, but places of pleasure; they provided an area to entertain guests and friends and a high vantage spot in which to sit and enjoy the fresh air and the views.

Adding to the fascination of the 'Three Famous Towers' is the way in which they are entwined with the literary world. Tengwang Tower's fame through the centuries was primarily due to the celebrated prose work *Foreword to the Poems of the Tengwang Tower* by the gifted Tang-dynasty scholar Wang Bo (650-676).

Even as a youth, Wang Bo showed talent far beyond the average. The way in which he came to write the above masterpiece is well known. It is said that Wang Bo was going south to visit his father by way of Hongzhou. It so happened that a banquet was being given to mark the completion of the repairs to Tengwang Tower implemented by the prefectural governor Yan Boyu, successor to Prince Teng. During the banquet, Yan Boyu asked all those present to improvise poems as though it were a sudden idea, but he had in fact asked his son-in-law to prepare a foreword beforehand and then pretend it was improvised in order to win praise. Knowing or suspecting this, one by one all those present begged to be excused. All, that is, except Wang Bo who boldly took up his brush and started to write. At first Yan was extremely displeased but, when he read the brilliant result, he could not help thumping the table and exclaiming 'What a genius!' Regrettably, not long afterwards, Wang Bo almost drowned and later died of the fright he had received. He was only in his twenties.

At any rate, after his prose work was published, other scholars vied to write essays about the Tengwang Tower, and it became one of the most famous tourist attractions along the lower reaches of the River Yangtse. Every Double Nine Festival (the ninth day of the ninth lunar month, which generally falls in October of the Gregorian calendar), successive army commanders and governors of Hongzhou would give banquets in the tower. Even at ordinary times, the tower was the venue for banquets of varying pomp and ceremony. When they visited Hongzhou, poets took great pleasure in climbing the tower to sit and drink and compose poems there. According to the historical records, the literati who described the scenery are too numerous to mention. Each time the tower was rebuilt or repaired (twenty-eight times in all!), the event was recorded and glorified. Though most have been lost in the course of time, more than 1,300 such literary works have been collected.

Occupying an area of 4.7 hectares, the present Tengwang Tower is situated at the confluence of the rivers Ganjiang and Fuhe about one hundred metres away from its original site. This 54-metre-high building in Song-dynasty style was designed by the architect Liang Sicheng on the basis of pictures of the tower executed in the Song dynasty and other records. Its ornate outline formed a sharp contrast to the old-style single-storeyed houses I passed on my way from the Qingshanhu Hotel where I was staying.

I walked around the tower from every angle. Although it appears to be of wood like its predecessors, this modern version is actually of reinforced concrete. It is used as a sort of exhibition hall, the majority of the decorations and installations being connected with the building and rebuilding of the tower.

The large mural which greets you as you enter illustrates a tale from the Ming-dynasty novelist Feng Menglong's novel *Stories to Awaken Men*. On the second storey there are large landscape paintings portraying the magnificent sight described in Wang Bo's foreword. On the front wall of the third storey – the main floor – is engraved the full text by Wang Bo; on display in the side hall on this floor are historical documents and relics to do with the tower. The exhibits on the fourth storey relate to famous scholars of Jiangxi Province. The fifth storey is a place for improvising inscriptions and paintings; while, on the sixth, there is a stage for performances of traditional operas, songs and dances.

When I was there, a concert of ancient music was in progress. Unfortunately, an admission ticket was required. I had none, so I walked over to the outer gallery and looked down but could not see the ground. My view was blocked by the jutting eaves of the storeys below, making me feel as if I were floating in the air.

Translated by Chen Jiaji

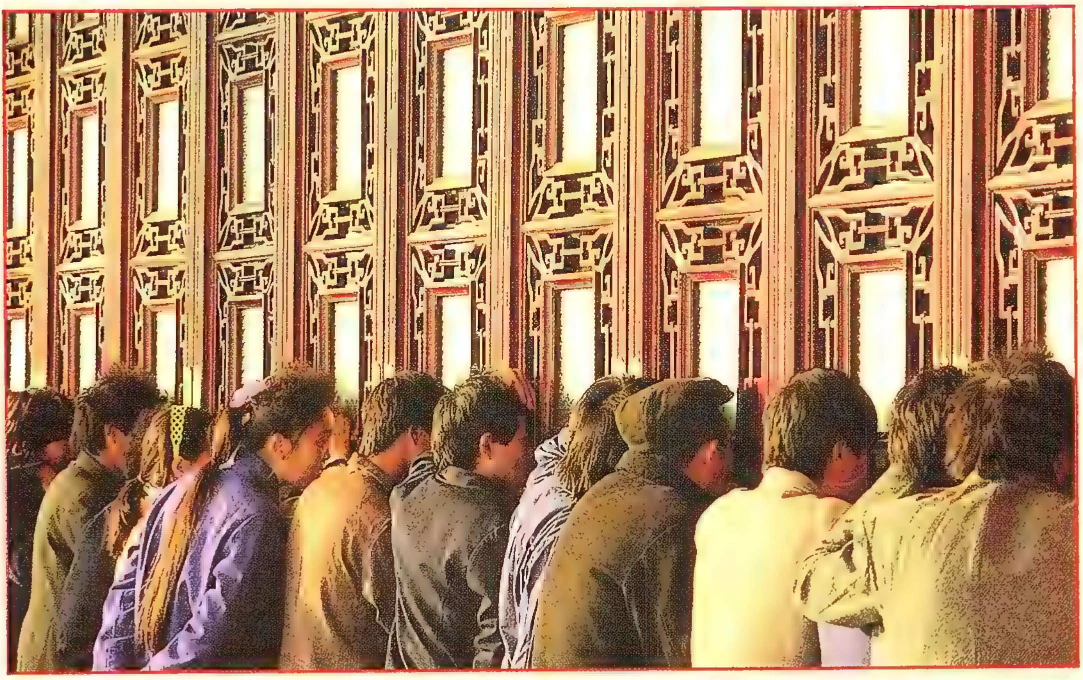
The latest reincarnation of Tengwang Tower (1) is hung with many inscriptions by poets and scholars; this one is by the Song-dynasty poet Su Dongpo (2).

1

The tower overlooking the River Ganjiang (1 and 5) is a centre for traditional performing arts (2) which draw fascinated crowds (3). It also contains a series of paintings on historical personages of Jiangxi (4).

2

Nanchang
南昌
JIANGXI
江西



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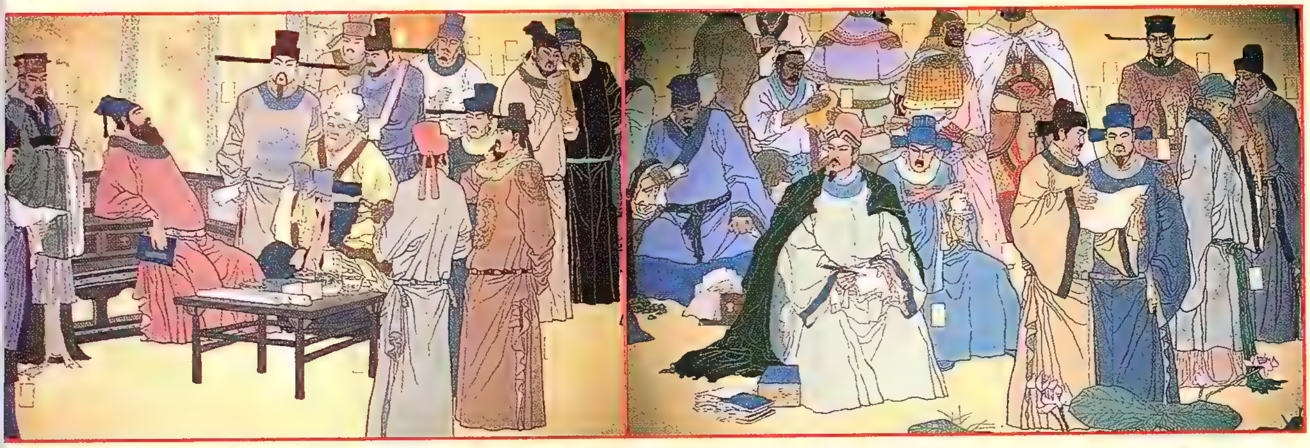
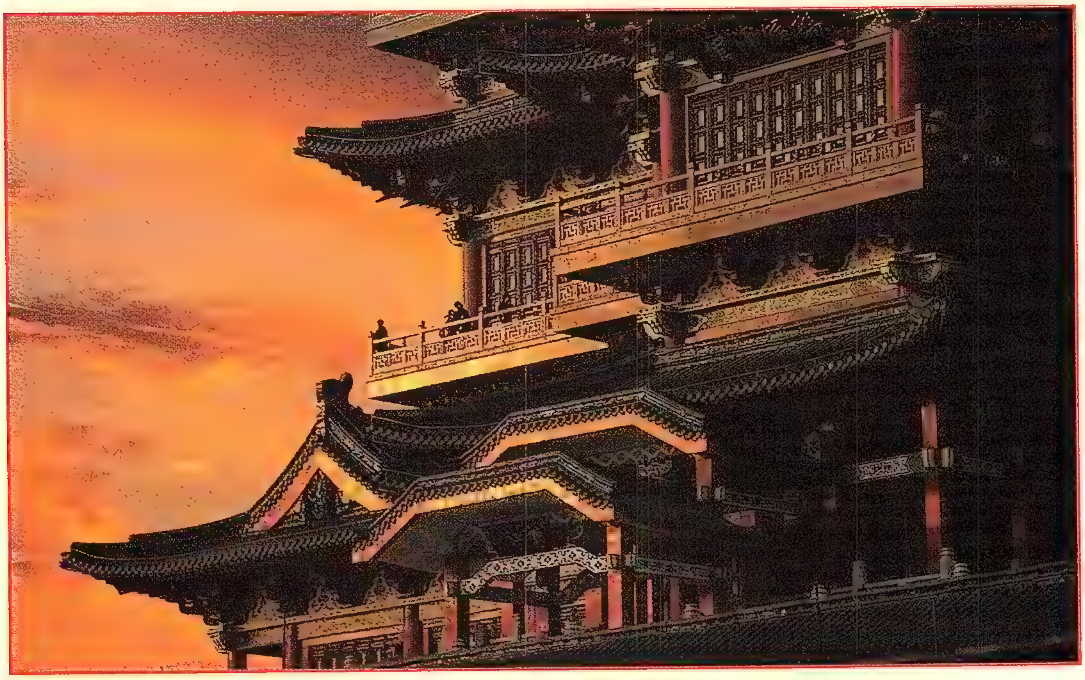
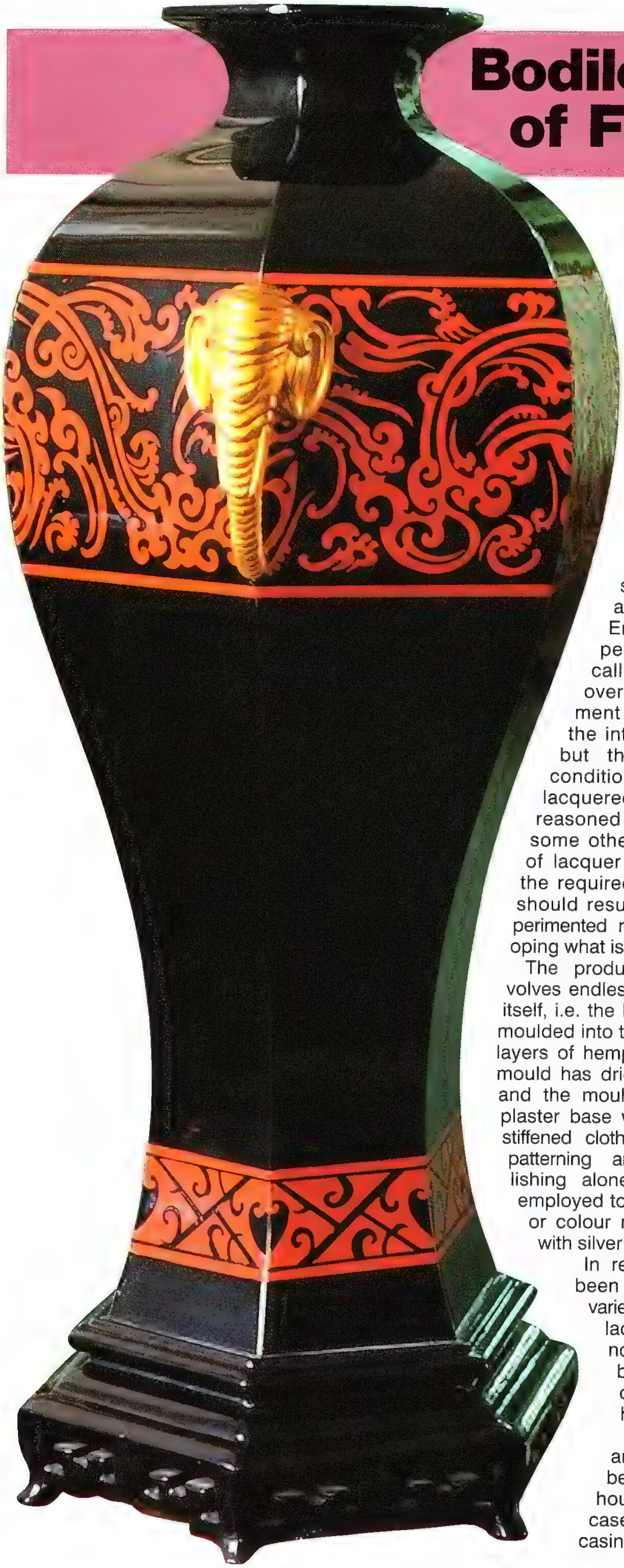




5

Bodiless Lacquerware of Fuzhou

PHOTOS & TEXT BY
WANG SONGNIAN



It is believed that the earliest recorded lacquerwares are those excavated from a Chinese tomb dating back to around the fourth century B.C. Chinese lacquerware is among the world's finest, and that produced by Fujian Province is accounted one of the country's most famous arts and crafts.

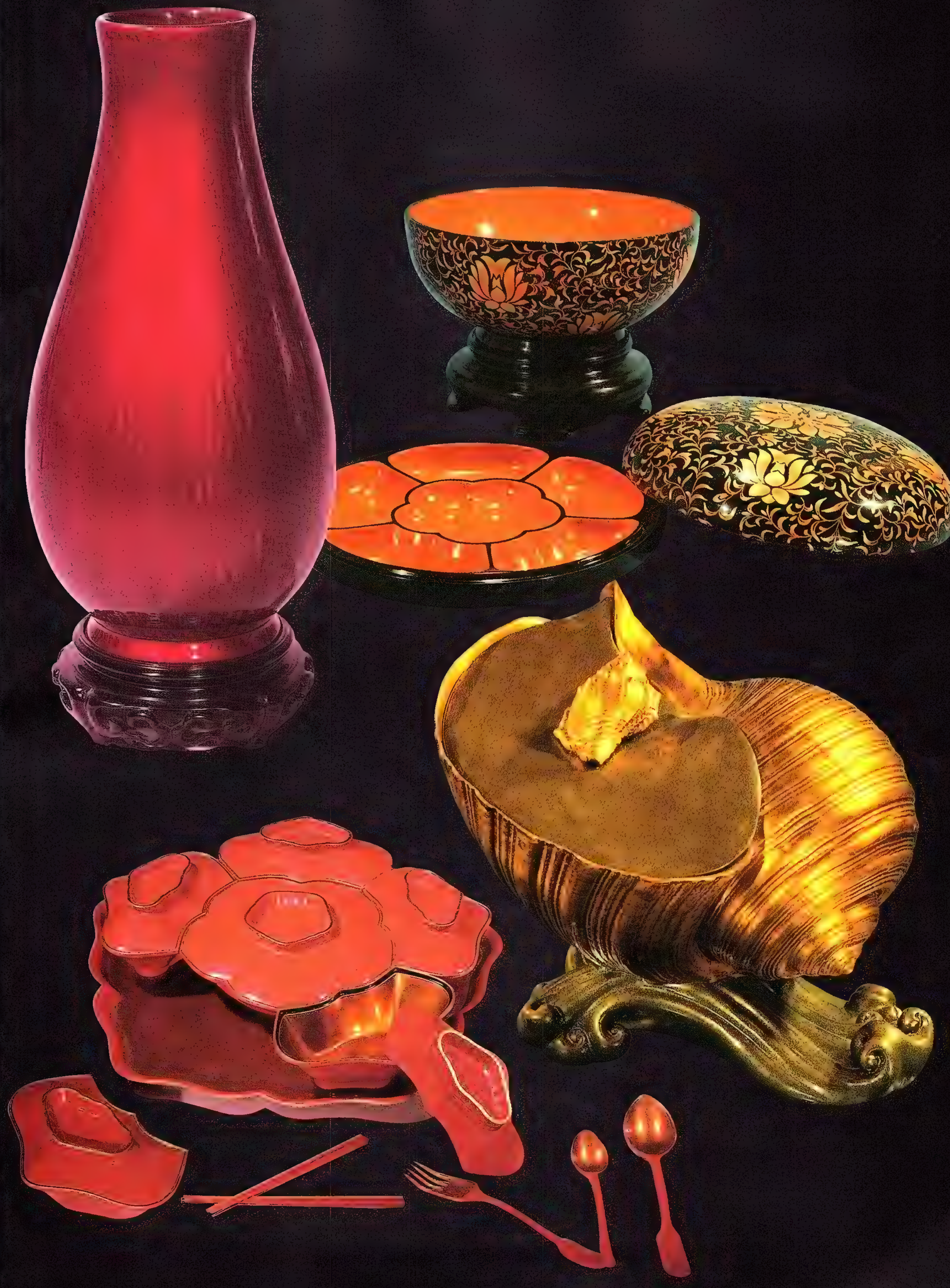
Fujian lacquerware is particularly noted for its lightness and durability in addition to its simple yet graceful shape, colour, lustre and pattern. It comes in a variety of forms. While that produced in the coastal cities of the province is often inlaid with gold, silver, egg shells or seashells, lacquerware from the city of Fuzhou itself is noted for its 'bodiless' properties.

Bodiless lacquerware was first produced about two hundred years ago in the Qing dynasty. It is said that the technique was invented in Fuzhou by a man named Shen Shao'an during the reign of Emperor Qianlong (1736-1795). Shen was an expert at repairing lacquerware. One day he was called in to mend a crack on the horizontal board over the entrance to the *yamen*, the local government office. When he examined it, Shen found that the interior of the wooden board had rotted away but the exterior was still in basically good condition. This outside was actually a layer of lacquered cloth. This started Shen thinking. He reasoned that he could coat a 'body' of wood or some other suitable material with alternate layers of lacquer and cloth, let them dry hard to form the required shape, then remove the 'body'. This should result in a light yet durable article. He experimented repeatedly until he succeeded in developing what is now known as bodiless lacquerware.

The production of such lacquerware still involves endless procedures that start with the 'body' itself, i.e. the base, which is made of clay or plaster moulded into the desired shape. It is then covered in layers of hemp or cloth and raw lacquer. After the mould has dried, a hole is punched in the bottom and the mould submerged in water. The clay or plaster base will dissolve in the water, leaving the stiffened cloth and lacquer cast behind. Polishing, patterning and embellishing follow. For embellishing alone more than a dozen methods are employed to produce different effects, such as black or colour rubbing, spraying with gold and inlaying with silver.

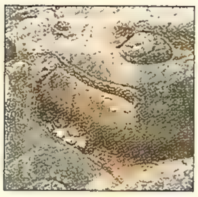
In recent decades many new techniques have been developed, resulting in an increase in the varieties available, such as relief work on thickened lacquer, lacquer painting (see CHINA TOURISM no.87),and products resembling porcelain or archaic bronzes. The technique has also been blended with carving techniques for jade, stone, ivory, wood and horn.

Lacquerware has proved to be resistant to acid and alkali, as well as insulating. Therefore, apart from being ornamental, it makes very practical yet charming household articles such as containers, stationery cases, chopsticks, serving trays, and even outer casings for radios and thermos flasks.



Traces of the Past

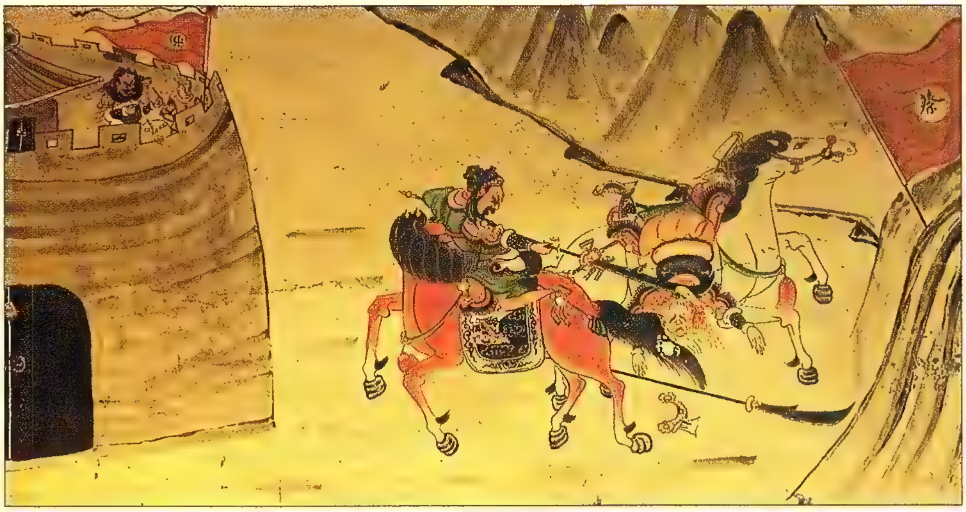
PHOTOS BY WONG CHUNG FAI
ARTICLE BY CAO HAN



My trip by car from Tianshui in southeastern Gansu down through to Jiuzhaigou in northern Sichuan was unexpectedly full of reminders of history: ancient tombs and monuments, misty Mount Jifeng, the battlefield at Qishanbu on Mount Qishan....

1

Ancient Battlefield



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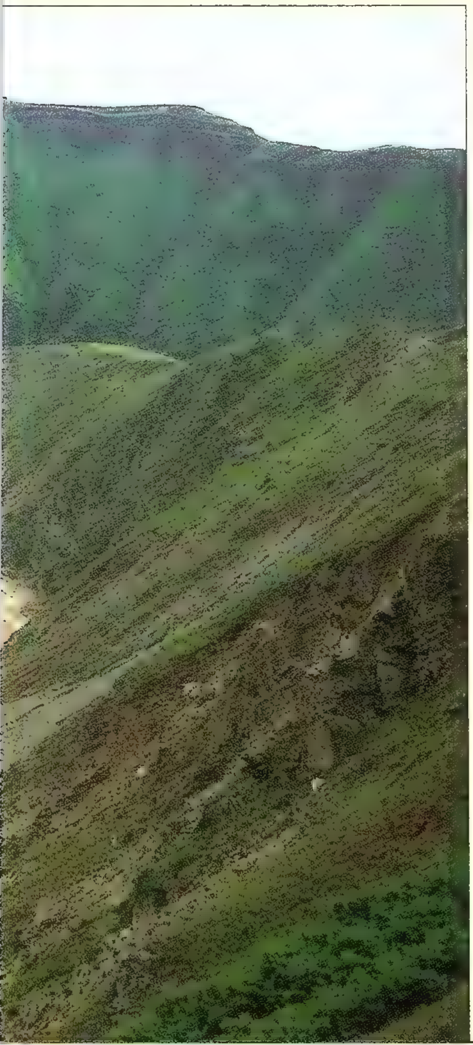
En route to Lixian County I broke my journey at Qishanbu, still some twenty kilometres short of the county seat. This area is associated with Zhuge Liang (181-234), the statesman and military strategist of Shu during the Three Kingdoms Period who was the trusted prime minister of Liu Bei, founder of that kingdom. Zhuge Liang is said to have brought his troops here on his northern expedition against the Kingdom of Wei, the ruler of which was Cao Cao, Liu Bei's arch-rival.

The entrance to the fort at Qishanbu is very narrow, but it leads into a fairly large open space. It is here that Zhuge Liang is supposed to have drilled and reviewed his troops.

Why did he choose Qishanbu as his base? Apparently because the fort set on Mount Qishan was impregnable, a fact which had caused it to be fought over since ancient times. There are undulating hills to east and west and the River Xihan flows by from north to south. In any case, this is a fertile area, so that it offered farming as well as strategic advantages. Zhuge Liang was able to provision his men with fresh food grown on the spot in lulls during their campaigns.

Later, after suffering defeat at the hands of Wei, he was forced to withdraw his troops. But Zhuge Liang's six battles against Wei to recapture Mount Qishan as described in the classic novel *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms* are mere fiction, however artistically treated. According to the biography of Zhuge Liang given in *San Guo Zhi (Annals of the Three Kingdoms)*, an official history written in Western Jin times (265-316), he did initiate five campaigns to capture Mount Qishan over a period of some eight years. However, he only managed to regain control of the mountain twice, that is, during the first and fourth of the campaigns described in the novel.

Exiting from the drill ground I walked up some steps to the Memorial Temple of Zhuge Liang on the hilltop. According to local lore it was built in the Southern and Northern Dynasties (386-581) and renovated in Ming and Qing times. The temple is a gable-roofed building with three courtyards. Right in the centre of the main hall is a statue of Zhuge Liang, valiant and heroic of bearing, feathered fan in hand.



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The entrance to the fortified site at Qishanbu where Zhuge Liang drilled his troops (1) and an ancient battlefield (2). Warriors engage in single-handed combat, recalling the tumultuous Three Kingdoms Period (3) (all by Chapman Lee).

1

Mount Jifeng

Southwest of the county town of Chengxian further to the south is Mount Jifeng which, as its name suggests, looks rather like the comb of a rooster. The mountain is the site of four monasteries and, when the climatic conditions are right, the atmosphere is full of religious mystery as mists and clouds drift and swirl around the buildings.

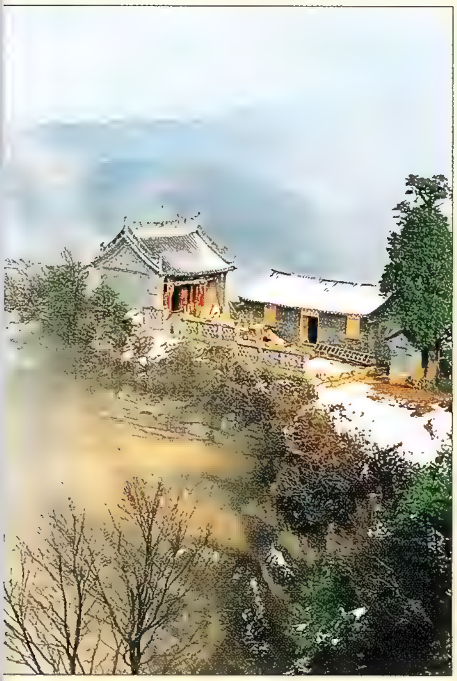
Early one morning I hired a car to take me the thirty odd kilometres to the mountain. We chugged with some effort up the winding mountain road and, after an hour or so, abandoned the vehicle in the parking lot at the base of Mount Jifeng. I set out to scale it on foot.

It is frighteningly precipitous. Looking down from the television tower on its summit, I saw vast stretches of farmland extending as far as the eye could see, dotted with tiny, ant-like spots – farmers working in the fields.

Near the television tower there is a Buddhist monastery which has only recently been re-

3

Cockscomb)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novated. The religious name of the abbot there, a young man in his twenties, is Chang Hui (Wisdom Flourished). Wrapped in a red robe, he seemed to be a case of 'an old head on young shoulders'. We were having a chat when he excused himself, saying that he had to go along to make offerings to the 'clay roosters'.

Intrigued, I followed him. To my astonishment, after lighting several joss-sticks, he set off nimbly up the sheer cliff like a mountaineer. Balancing his body against the cliff-face, he made his way to a tiny ledge containing two clay roosters. There he set the joss-sticks in the incense burner, prostrated himself before the images, then coolly returned to where I stood open-mouthed.

I sized up the stretch of about twenty metres he had just so casually manoeuvred himself up and down — in his cumbersome robes, too! It seemed to me to be even more dangerous than the infamous plank path at Mount Huashan.

Mount Jifeng is another place with a long history. Liu Bang, who became Emperor Gaozu (reign dates 206-195 B.C.), founder of the Han dynasty, is said to have come here. At one time the mountain was home to both Taoist and Buddhist communities. But, as Buddhism gradually evolved into the leading religion, the Taoists were forced to move their temples back down to the foot of the mountain.

A dizzying feat (1) as a monk makes offerings to the 'clay roosters' (3) on Mount Jifeng (2, by Liu Xiguang).

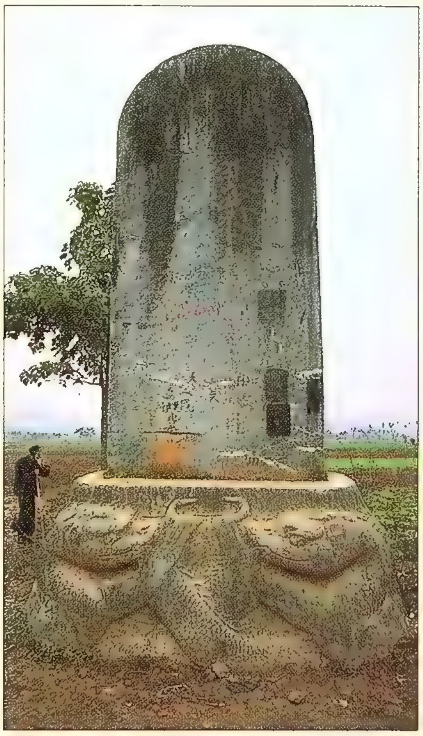
The Monument of Wu Ting

Sauntering through the streets of Chengxian itself, I saw a number of stone animals — horses and sheep — lying scattered by the roadside, some covered with soil, apparently forgotten and neglected. The sheen produced by their long exposure to the elements and the primitive simplicity of their design suggested that they must be truly ancient. My interest in them eventually resulted in a local person coming over to tell me that they had been moved here from the Monument of Wu Ting some two kilometres away. Wu was a general of the Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279) famous for his resistance to the Jin invaders.

I went out to see the monument. About five metres high, it stood surrounded by farmland. A farmer tilling nearby told me that there used to be four columns supporting the monument like an arch, so that it had once been possible for a horseman to ride under it. But today the four columns are buried deep in the ground and only the monument itself remains for us to admire.

It was erected in 1203 during the Song dynasty in recognition of Wu Ting's distinguished service to the emperor. Four dragon-like beasts with fierce animal heads but the bodies of snakes coil around the monument's base like twisted roots around an ancient tree. These creatures are exquisitely carved; the scales on their backs are particularly impressive. Such a monument is a rare sight in this part of the country. It is a great shame that the inscription is no longer decipherable.

The Memorial of Wu Ting at Chengxian (4) and its elaborately carved base (5).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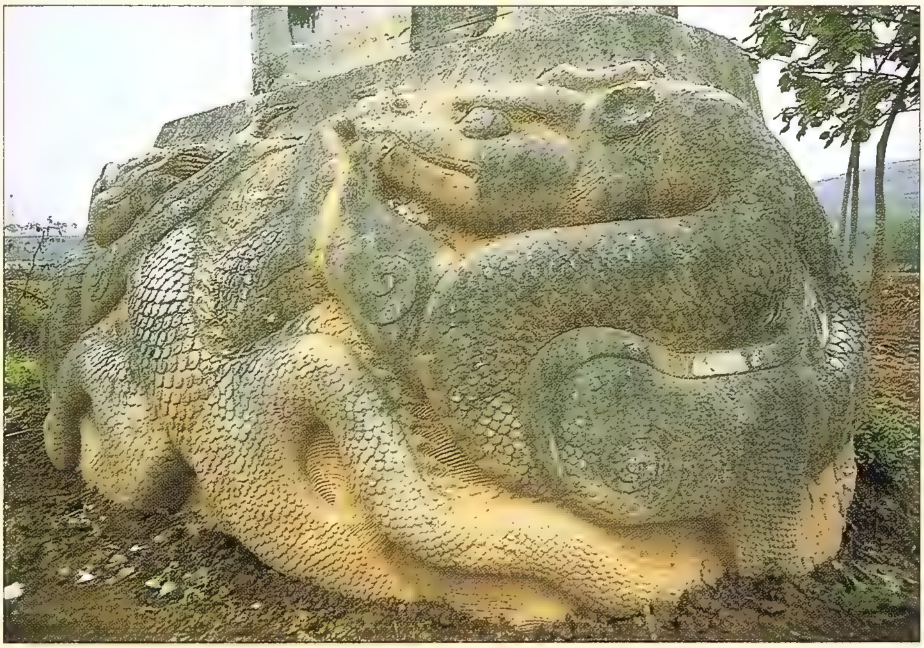
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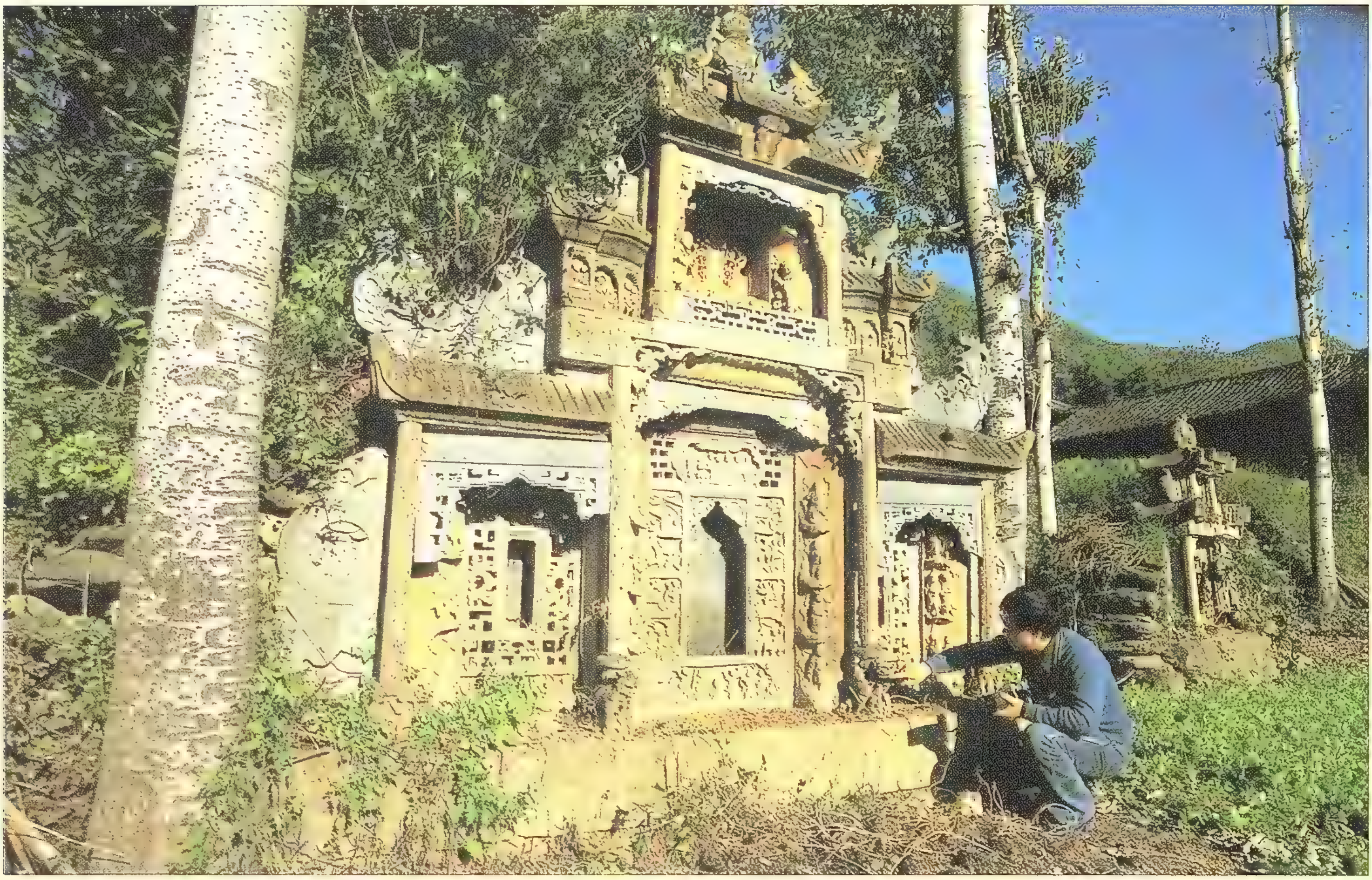
Old Tombs of Wenxian County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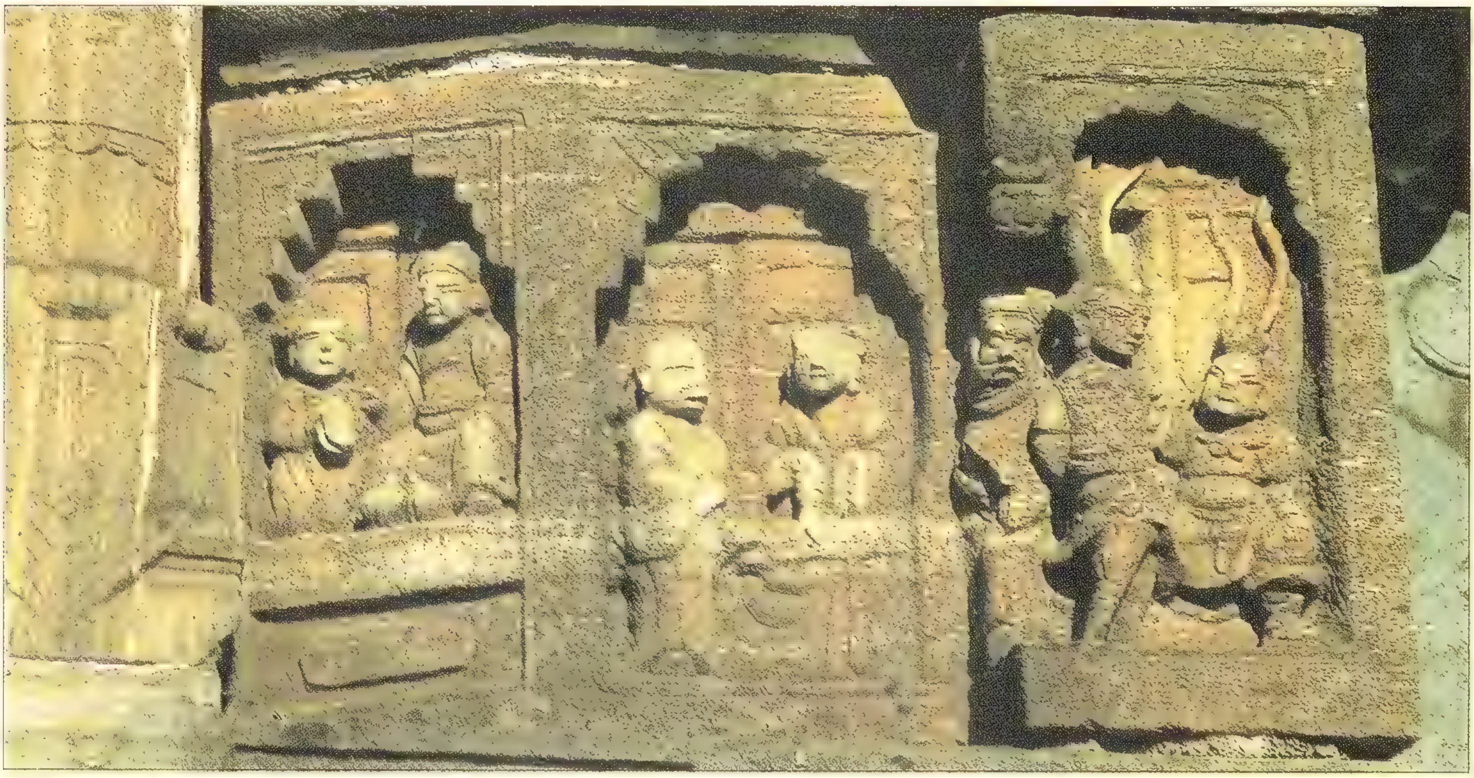
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Following this I stayed for three days in the township of Bikou in Wenxian County, which is situated at the southernmost tip of Gansu. A local friend told me he had something special to show me. So off we went on foot, climbing a hill near a village. The slope was scattered with tombs of different shapes and sizes – our goal.

The tombs here date from the Qing dynasty (1644-1911) and down to the present day. Some of the epitaphs on the tombstones have been renovated with red paint, but many other tombs are overgrown with weeds, their occupants forgotten by the world.

I bypassed several tombs over a metre high to reach one with a facade about three metres high and two metres wide, the largest one on the hill. Poplar trees stood straight and symmetrical on either side like a frame.

The tomb facade was somewhat like the entrance to an ancient palace, with a main gate in the centre and side gates to right and left. I discovered that the facade had three or four tiers of carvings. The outermost were ornate stone carvings with stories of filial sons and daughters as their main theme. The central part was carved with reliefs of emperors, generals and ministers.

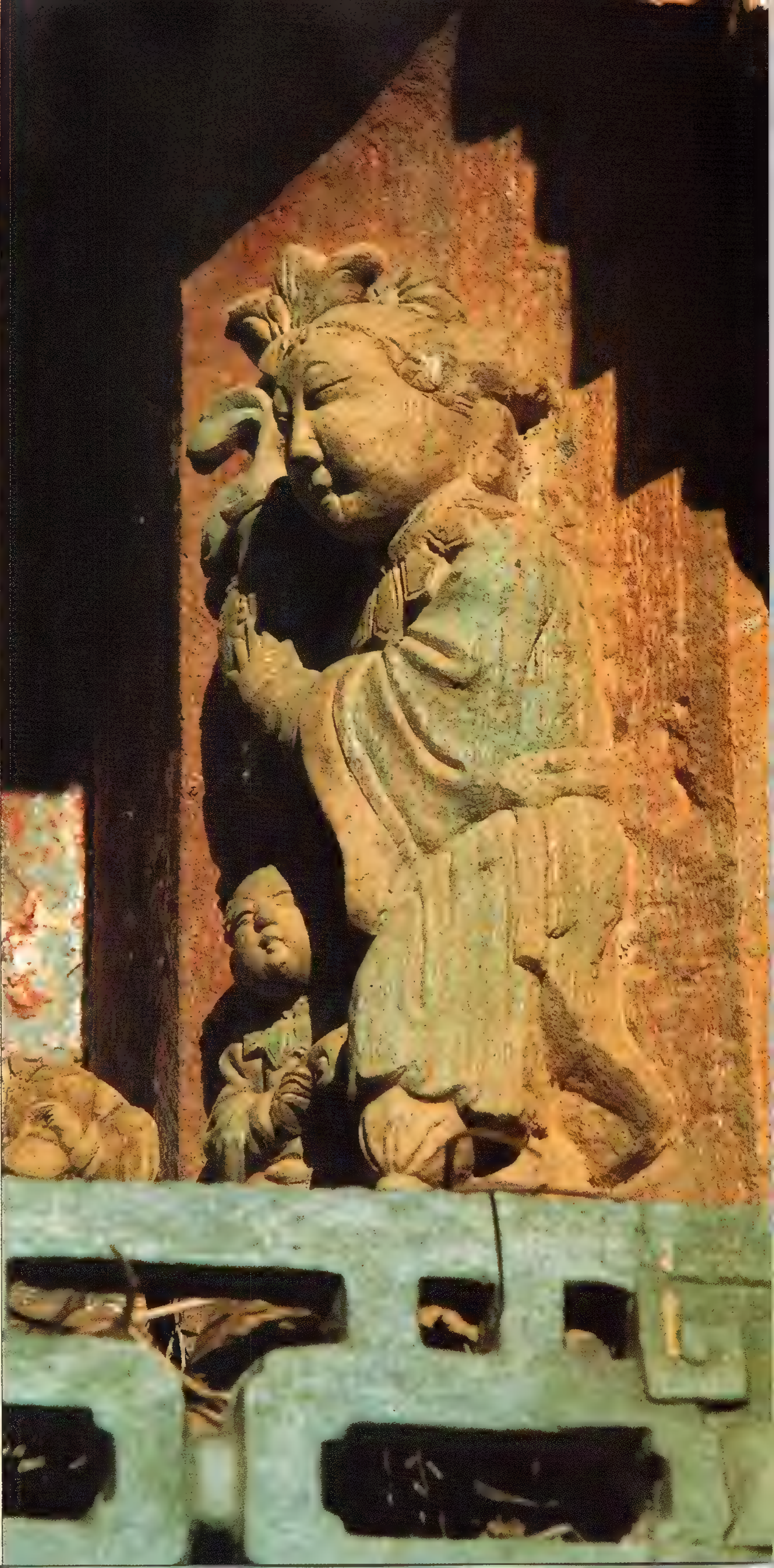
Probably to emphasize the wealth and rank of the tomb occupant in his lifetime, the facade was made up of slabs of different coloured stone, although this could also be a sign of repairs undertaken at different times through the ages.

The skill of Bikou's stone carvers is famous throughout northern Sichuan and southern Gansu. Since all the artisans here are originally from Sichuan, the carvings in this area – whether in monasteries and ancestral shrines or on stone arches and tombstones – have features typical of southwestern China.

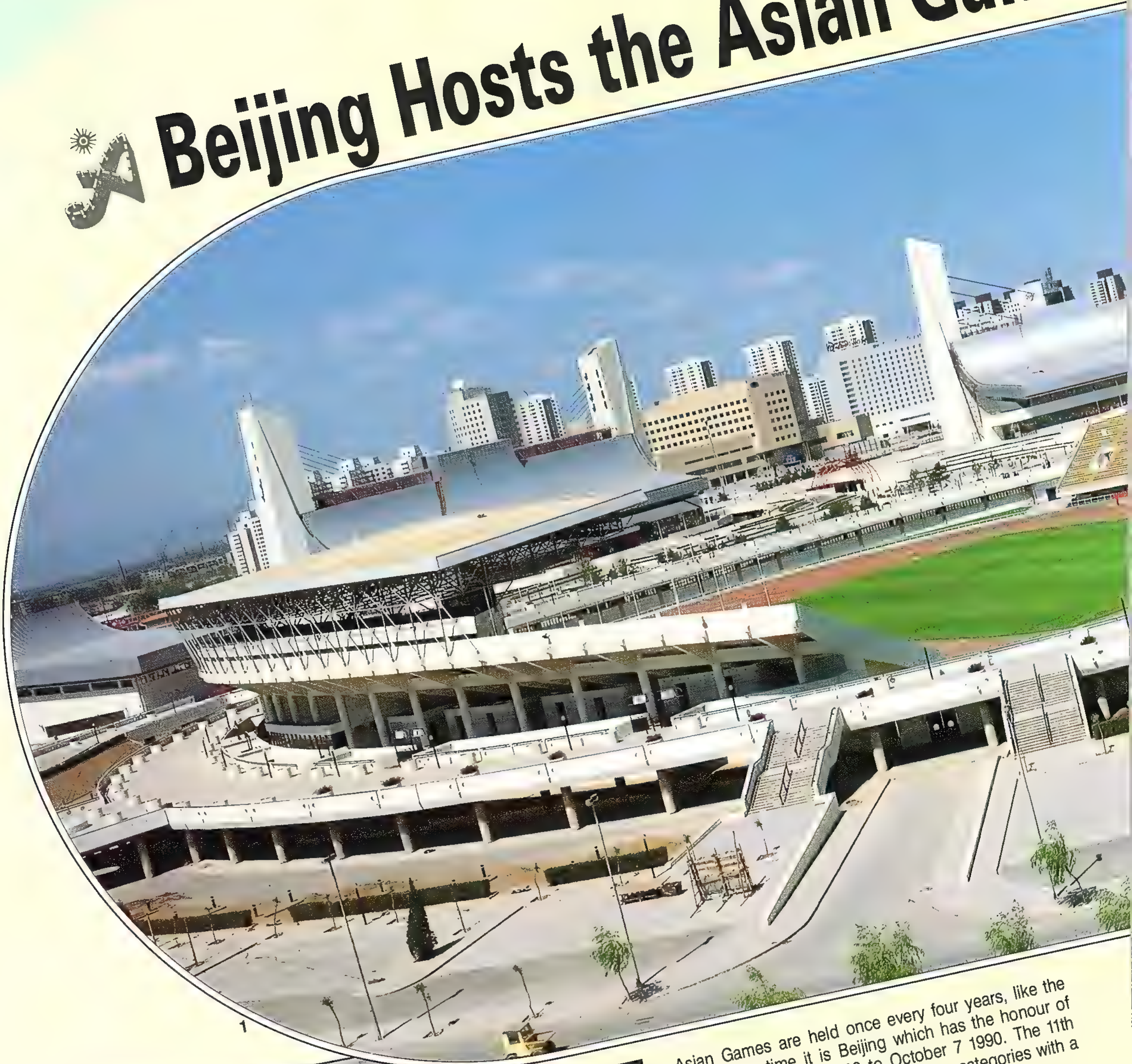
This particular tomb was constructed in 1800 for a rich man from the village of Hejiawan near Bikou. At one time he served as the county magistrate. The local belief was that, if all the rites were observed and if a dead person's tomb was ornate, he was certain to go to paradise and not to hell. This is why such importance was attached to funeral rites and why, in the past, people did not hesitate to spend a fortune on the construction of their final resting place.

Translated by Ren Jiazhen

Tomb dating from 1800 (1), and a detail of its relief carvings (2). The stone carvers of Bikou are famous for their meticulous work (3).



Beijing Hosts the Asian Games



1

2

The Asian Games are held once every four years, like the Olympics. This time it is Beijing which has the honour of hosting them from September 22 to October 7 1990. The 11th Asian Games feature twenty-seven competition categories with a total of 308 individual events.

In preparation for this major sporting festival, Beijing has built sixteen new stadiums and gymnasiums and renovated eleven existing ones. Apart from the venue for the aquatic events which is Qinhuangdao on the Hebei coast, around 300 kilometres east of the capital, all the others are located in districts, counties and even on university campuses within Greater Beijing.

The opening and closing ceremonies are to be held in the newly renovated Workers' Stadium which has seating for 80,000 but the majority of the new stadiums and gymnasiums are located in the Beijiao Sports Centre – alias the Olympic Centre – in northern Beijing which, along with the Asian Games Village, forms the nucleus of the 'Asian Games City'.

ARTICLE BY HE LUO

4

5

3

The Beijiao Sports Centre (1, by Hu Weibiao), the Chaoyang Gymnasium (3) and the Asian Games Village (4) are among the newly built complexes. Workers put the final touches to a gymnasium exterior (5) while others join the exodus from the capital now that this massive project is completed (2) (2-5 by Du Dianwen).

I paid a visit to this complex shortly before the opening of the Asian Games. From central Beijing I headed north, noting the great numbers of posters and advertisement hoardings promoting the Games. It took me about half an hour to reach my destination.

Located at the junction of Anli Road and Sihuan Road North nine kilometres from Tian'anmen Gate and covering an area of sixty-six hectares, the Beijiao Sports Centre comprises such facilities as a stadium, baseball court, swimming-pool complex, multi-purpose gymnasium and hockey pitch. It also includes a dope testing centre, a sports museum and a research institute for martial arts.

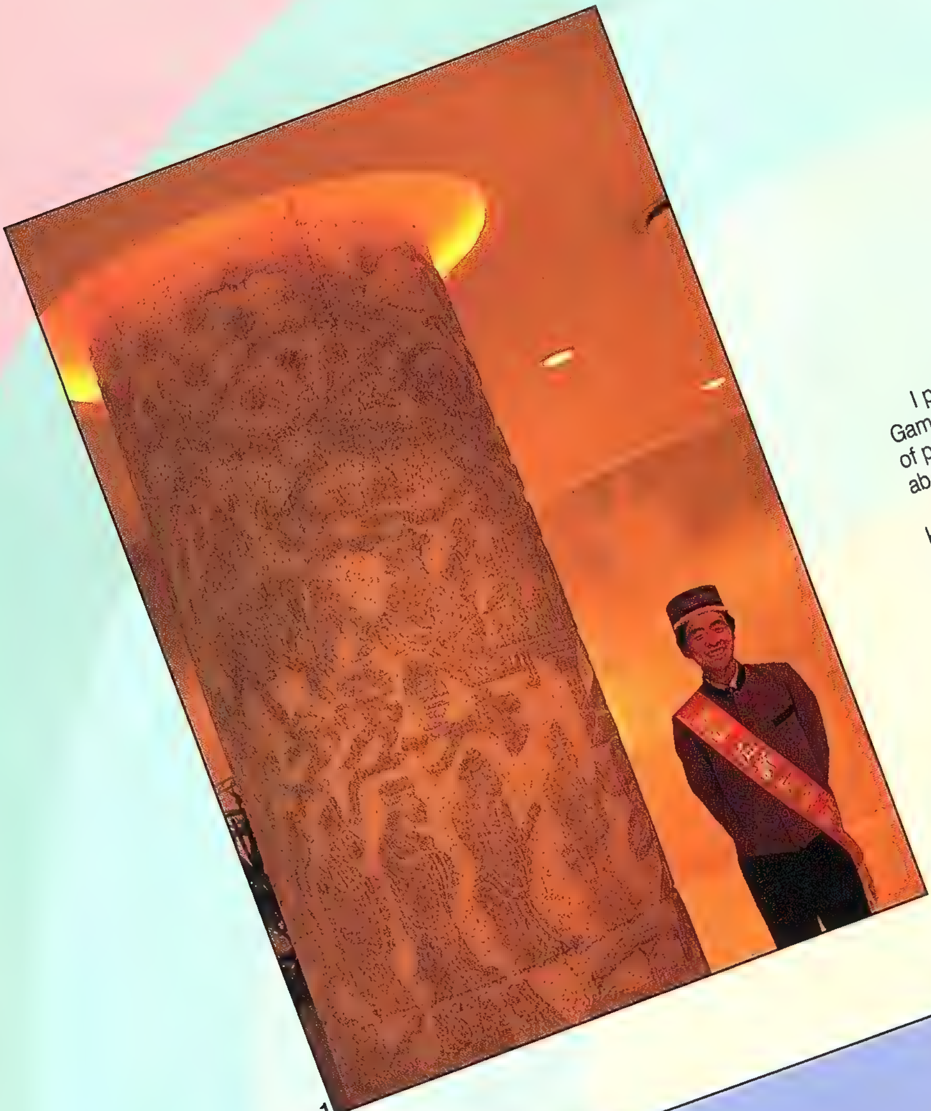
The most eye-catching features of the centre are the swimming-pool complex and the gym, both of which are said to have seating for 6,000 spectators. Their roofs are made of silvery-grey steel plates. At either end of these buildings stand tall pillars in the shape of a diving tower, with parallel steel cables apparently supporting the canopy-like roof.

Only one street away to the north, the Asian Games Village gives the impression of being a 'city within a city'. Not so surprising really when you think that about five thousand athletes from over thirty Asian countries and regions are expected to participate.

It has an area of 500,000 square metres and consists of six multi-storey blocks of flats as well as the Conference Centre (which will act as the press centre during the Games), Huibin Building, Wuzhou (Five Continents) Hotel, Kangle Palace, a shopping mall, post office, clinic, etc. It also has beautiful landscaped gardens set out around a lake. During the period of the Asian Games, this is where the athletes and their coaches will be lodged, but also many of the officials and organizers, technicians and foreign correspondents.

The general aim of the design concept was to satisfy all the athletes' requirements so that they would have no need to leave the 'village' for food, accommodation, shopping or recreation. After the Asian Games, this complex will become the Beijing International Conference Centre.

The Wuzhou Hotel is where the international press will be staying during the 11th Asian Games. It consists of two towers of thirteen and seventeen storeys respectively, with a total of 1,200 guestrooms equipped with IDD



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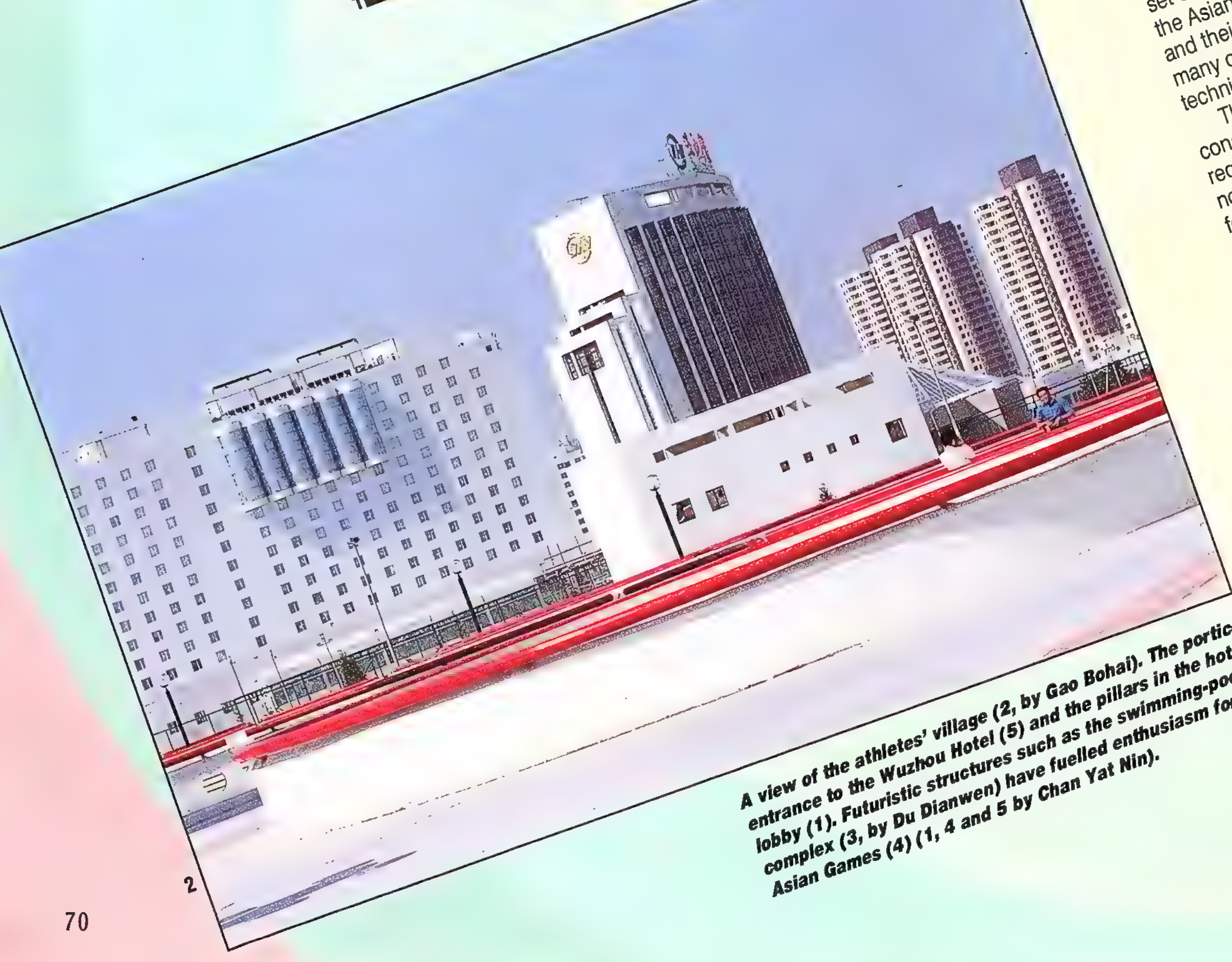

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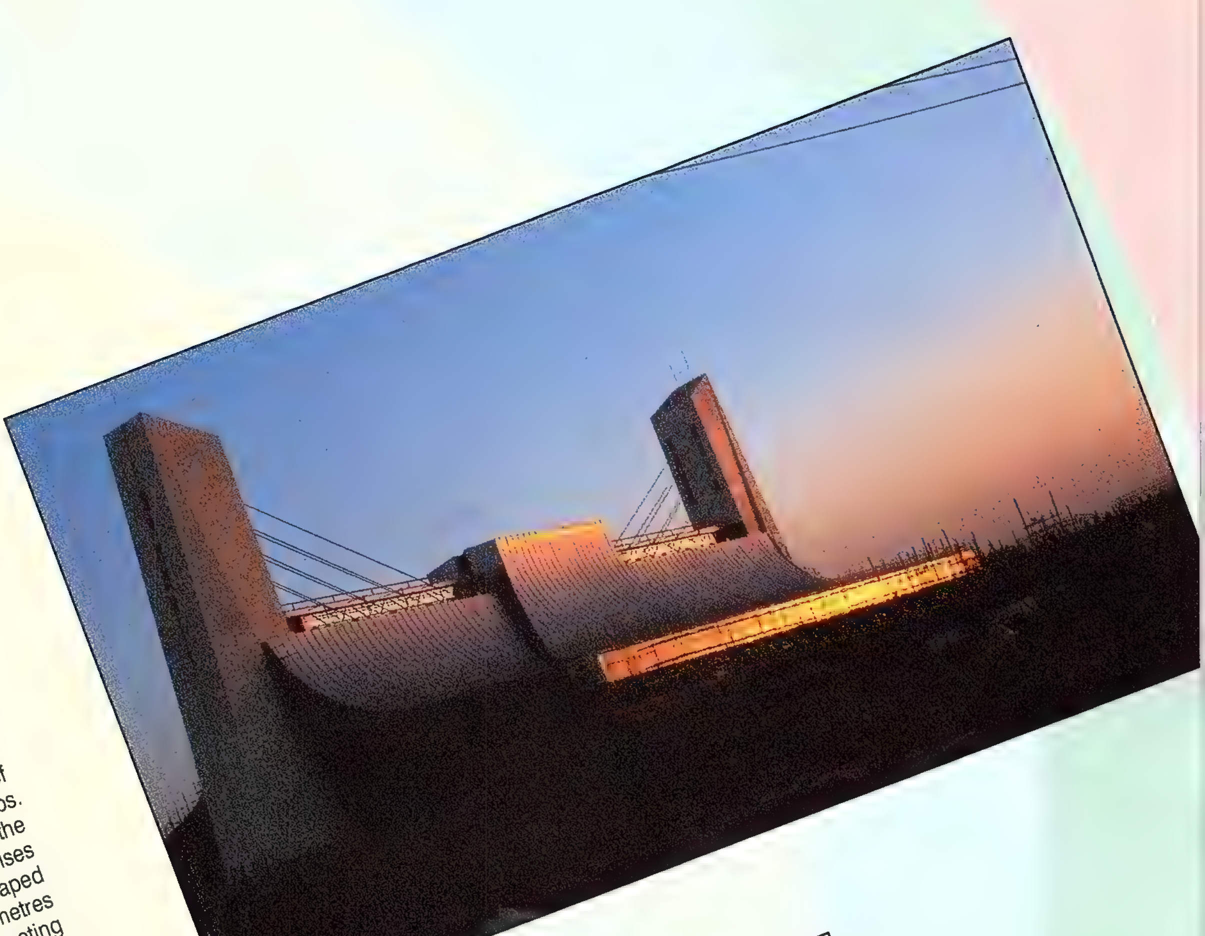
A view of the athletes' village (2, by Gao Bohai). The portico entrance to the Wuzhou Hotel (5) and the pillars in the hotel lobby (1). Futuristic structures such as the swimming-pool complex (3, by Du Dianwen) have fuelled enthusiasm for the Asian Games (4) (1, 4 and 5 by Chan Yat Nin).

and other communications facilities. The hotel's architecture is a combination of Chinese and Western styles, with a grand portico over the entrance to the main building. A more traditional touch can be seen inside, in the hotel lobby. The granite pillars here are carved with reliefs in designs modelled on the bas-reliefs of the Han dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 220). Facilities for the media include the 20 x 12-metre colour screen which has been erected in the Workers' Stadium, the main venue for the Asian Games. Through microwave relay stations, around thirty multi-channel microwave signals from the various venues can be transmitted to the rest of the world via satellite. A 405-metre TV transmission tower has been erected to the west of Yuyuantan in Beijing's western suburbs.

To the west of the Wuzhou Hotel, the yellow-greyish Conference Centre comprises an octagonal hall connected to an S-shaped tower. Its floor space of 45,000 square metres houses more than forty conference and meeting rooms of differing sizes, the largest able to accommodate 3,000 participants. The centre is equipped with an eight-language simultaneous interpretation system, computer-controlled management systems and a digital communications network, amongst other things.

The volleyball matches, one of the disciplines in which China is expected to do well, will be held in the new Chaoyang Gymnasium located in Liulitun, Chaoyang District. It has an area of some 9,700 square metres and seats 3,170. The elliptical building resembles a passenger ship, and the roof is supported from steel cables and structures shaped rather like a suspension bridge! Each of these new sports venues has its own innovative style; there is no repetition. The architects have given thought to making them multi-functional so that they can be put to the



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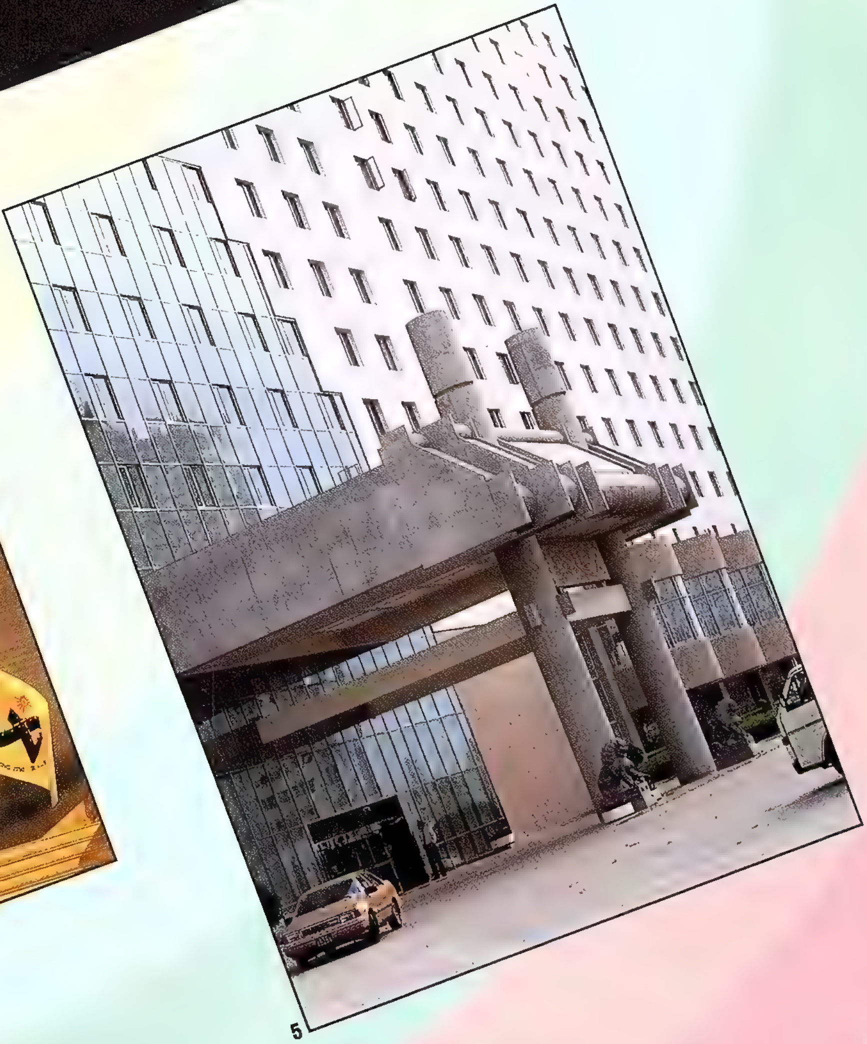

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widest possible use after the Asian Games. Besides, Beijing is known to be eyeing the possibility of hosting the Olympics at some stage – perhaps the year 2000?

The Beijiao Sports Centre, the Asian Games Village and all the other venues are linked by new highways and flyovers. A special fleet of cars and buses will ensure that Beijing's traffic snarl-ups do not impede the movements of contestants.

In the areas opened up by these new roads quite a number of residential quarters have sprung up over the last few years. Some are buildings twenty or so storeys high, others are high-class Western-type buildings of four to six storeys.

To act as a windbreak against the strong winds from the northwest and to aid beautification of the general environment, newly planted trees can be seen everywhere in Beijing. Some saplings

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2

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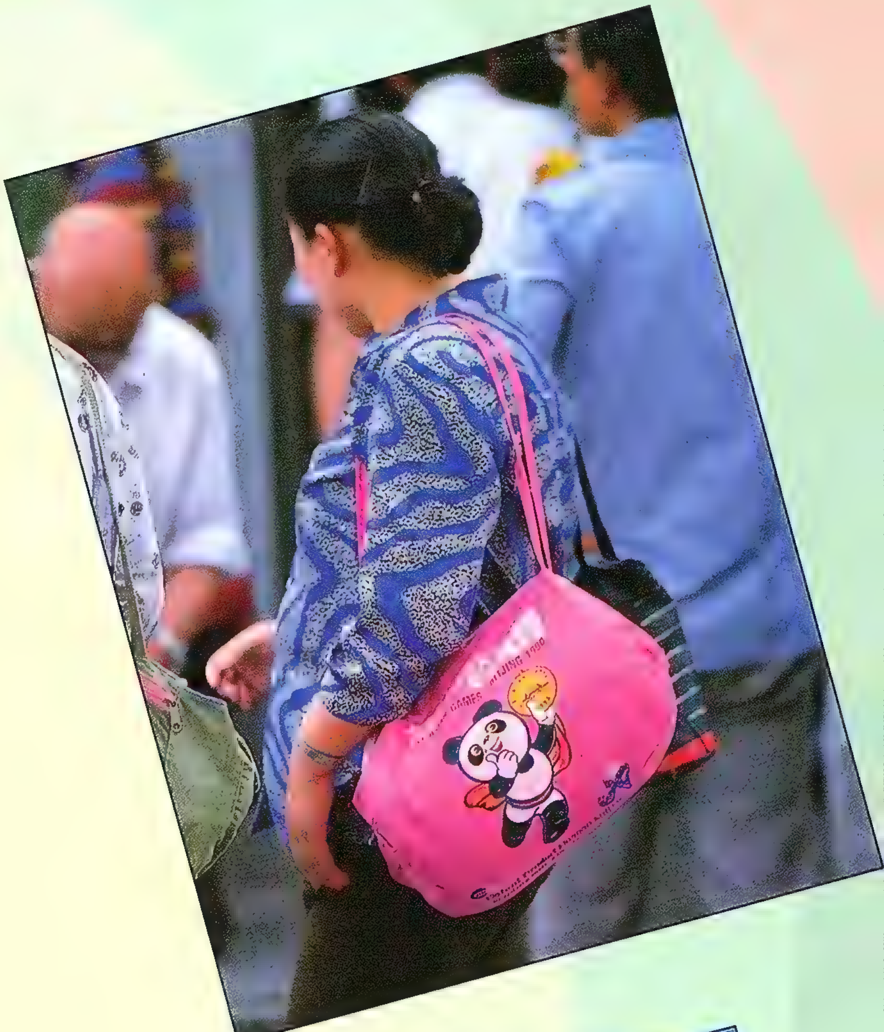
even wear 'coats' — straw mats — as extra protection because of their vulnerability to the wind. In fact, thousands of trees have been planted for the Asian Games, not all of them young; some of those which have been transplanted here from elsewhere are mature trees anything up to fifty years old.

Roses and other flowers are also visible in great quantities in the flowerbeds set around the city and on the flyovers along the routes likely to be travelled by athletes and visitors, forming new green lungs where local residents happily do their morning exercises.

The date for the opening of the 11th Asian Games is now very close. Strolling through Beijing's streets, one finds posters and banners erected on either side of the street, some of them recording the 'countdown' to the big occasion. Others bear slogans, many of them adorned with a comical little panda — Pan Pan — who has been chosen as the mascot for the Games. He also appears on the plethora of tourist souvenirs which have been produced.

The whole population of the Chinese capital seems to have been co-opted to play their part. Schoolchildren wear caps sporting the emblem of the Asian Games when they go to school on Sundays to rehearse their performance at the opening ceremony (it is reported that more than 20,000 students will participate). Taxi drivers serve as volunteer traffic wardens during off-duty hours to practise their skill in directing traffic during the Games. Moreover, with more foreign tourists expected in Beijing during this period, they too are busily attending English classes so that they will be better equipped to deal with any possible queries or problems.

Translated by Tsui Lai Hing



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5

Pan Pan the panda mascot graces department stores (1) and small shops (2), as well as sundry souvenir items (4). A hostess, ready for her role at the opening ceremony (3), and Asian Games lottery tickets on sale near Qianmen Gate (5) (all by Ren Chenming).

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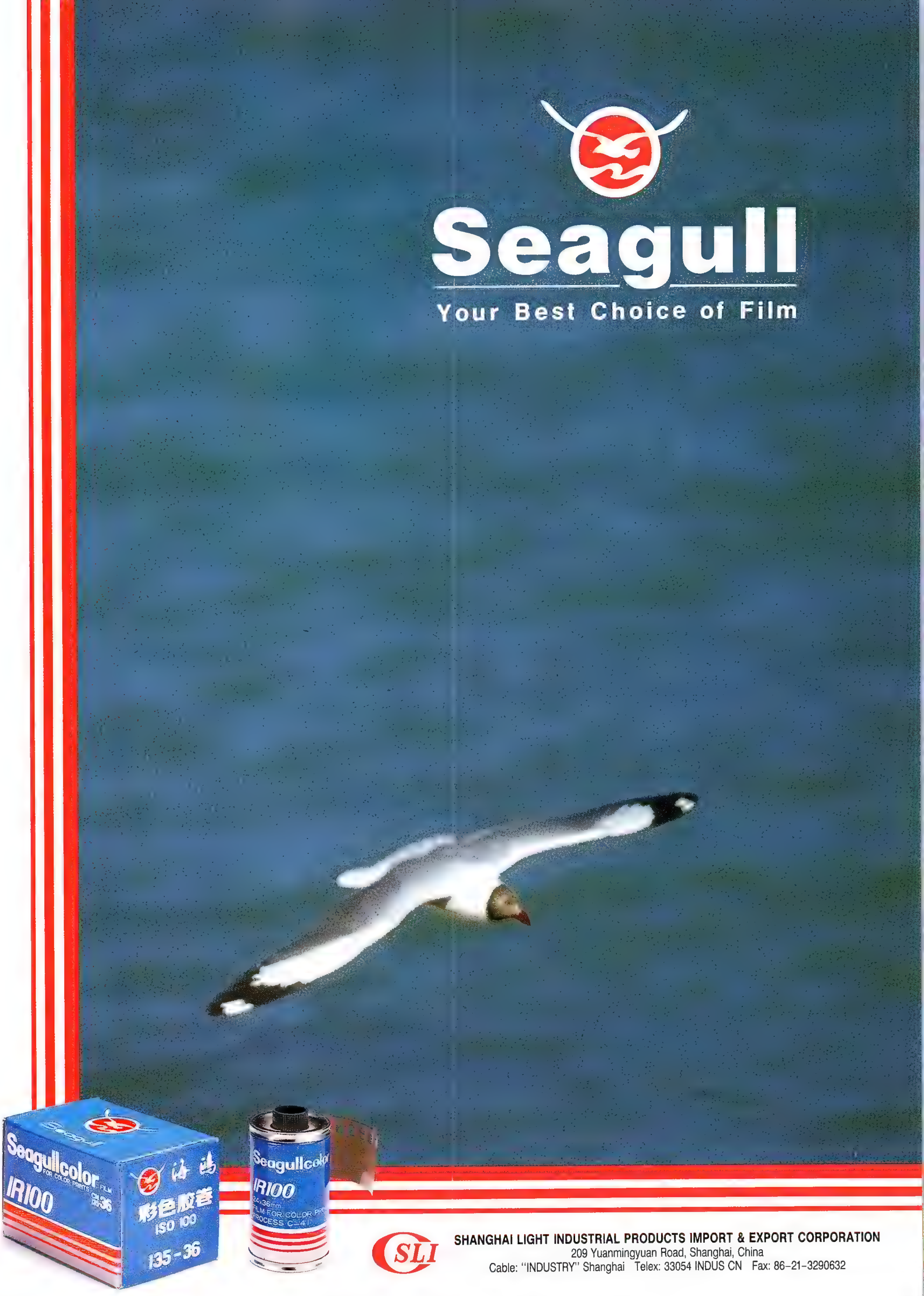

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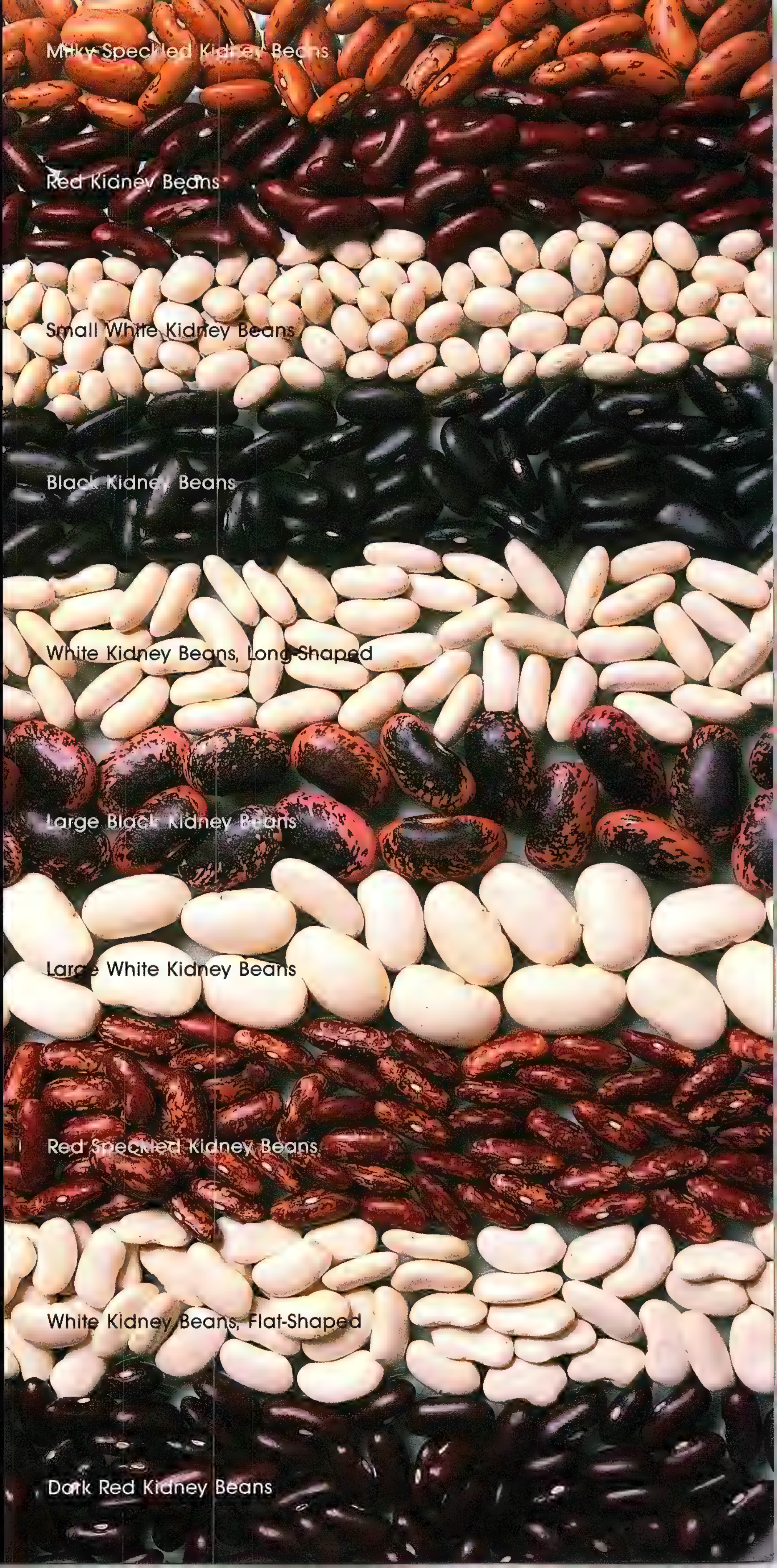
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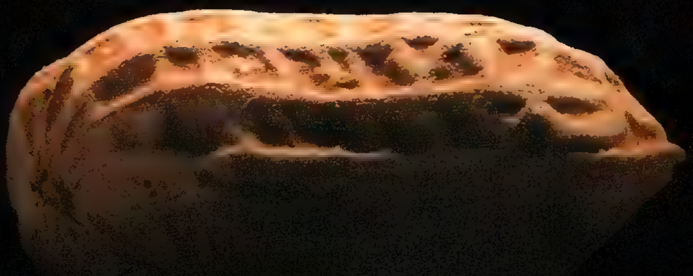

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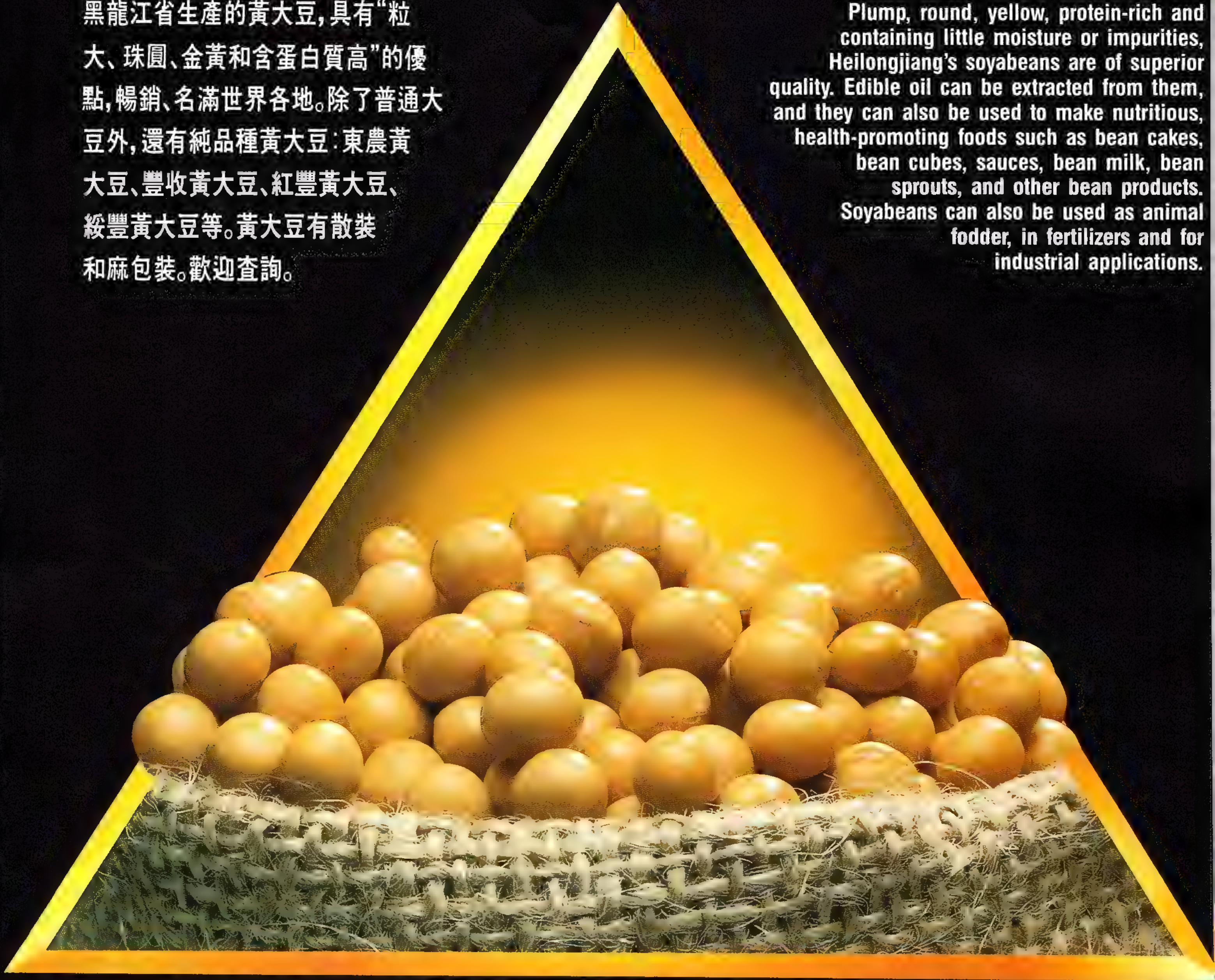

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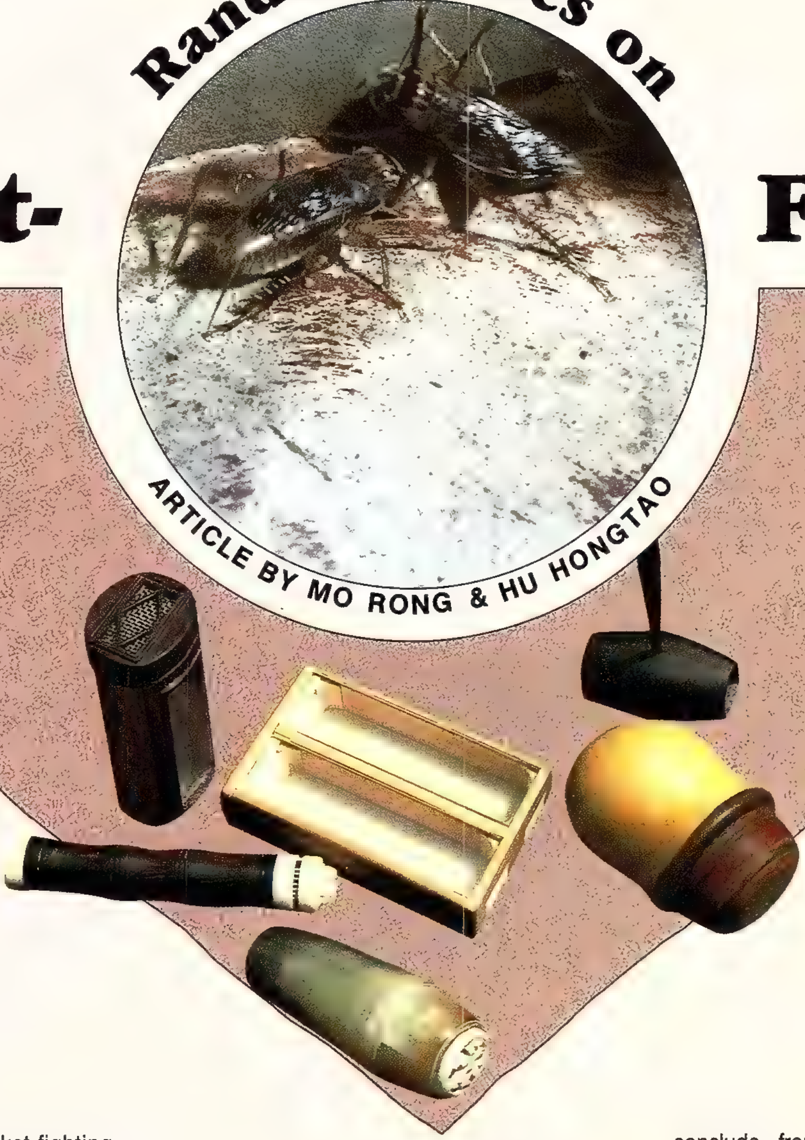
Random Notes on Cricket-Fighting

ARTICLE BY MO RONG & HU HONGTAO



Cricket-keeping and cricket-fighting have been favourite pastimes in China for a thousand years. This social and cultural phenomenom involved not just rulers, officials, upper-class men and women and rich merchants, but also ordinary people. Today, with better material conditions and a more diversified cultural life, cricket-fighting is being revived in China.

A Time-Honoured Sport

People have been amusing themselves with crickets for many, many centuries, first by listening to the musical chirping of the males, later by watching cricket-fighting as a pastime. The *Book of Songs*, a collection of poems and songs compiled some two thousand years ago, contains allusions to crickets: 'The year is going out when crickets enter the hall' and 'In the tenth month I find a cricket under my bed.' Traditionally, if a cricket came into a house voluntarily, it was said to bring the message that the year was coming to its close.

Perhaps it was the concubines caged for life in the harem, lonely and bored, who were the first to keep crickets. Wang Renyu, a writer of the Five Dynasties (907–960), observed in his book *Forgotten Tales of the Days of Kaiyuan and Tianbao* (Kaiyuan and Tianbao were reign titles of the Tang Emperor Xuanzong, who reigned between 713 and 756): 'When autumn came, the concubines in the palace all kept crickets in tiny gold cages to be placed by their pillow so that they could enjoy their singing during the night. People of the common run followed their example.'

Cricket-fighting began as early as the Tang dynasty (618–907). Gu Wenjian, a Song-dynasty (960–1279) writer, in his book *Miscellaneous Notes Written Under Winter Sunshine* recounted how rich men in the Tianbao reign 'carved cages out of ivory' to keep crickets and 'paid ten thousand taels of gold to bet on a cricket'. This is the earliest record of gambling on cricket-fighting. The author also added that cricket-fighting 'can be traced back to the remote past', but how remote he did not elaborate. However, we can conclude from all of the above that the cricket-fighting prevalent in the Tang capital Chang'an (now Xi'an in Shaanxi) did not come about all of a sudden.

Cricket-fighting was particularly popular in the Southern Song dynasty (1127–1279), when a man named Jia Sidao (1213–1275) became known as the 'Cricket Prime Minister'. Jia, the young brother of a concubine of Emperor Lizong, by dint of nepotism became a man of great influence second only to the emperor and retained this power for more than a decade. In 1259, when the Mongols started a campaign against the Song, Jia as Prime Minister took command of troops intended to reinforce the beleaguered Ezhou (modern Wuhan in Hubei). But instead of sending these troops into battle, Jia secretly sought to appease Kublai Khan, the Mongol army commander, by promising to give allegiance to the Mongols and offering

Containers for crickets and other insects made from a variety of natural, often precious, materials (by Chan Yat Nin). Inset: a cricket fight in progress (by Mo Rong & Hu Hongtao).

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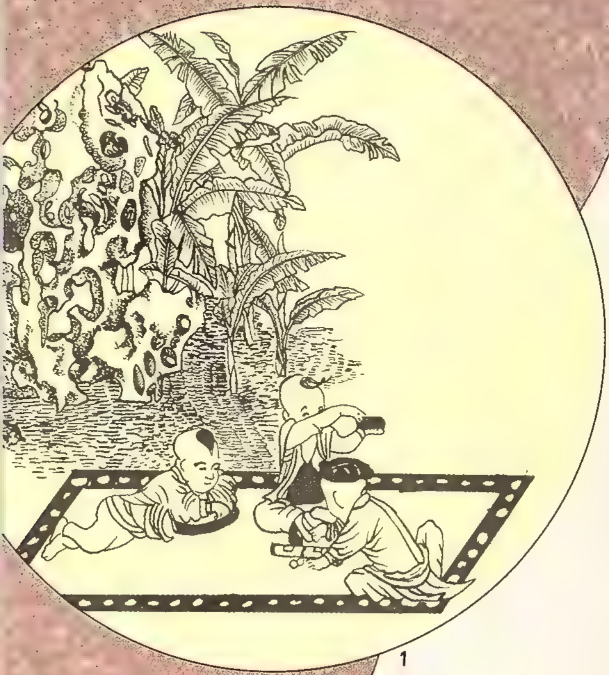


1

them an annual tribute of silk and silver. At the same time, he lied to the Song court that the siege of Ezhou had been raised, so that he was on several occasions given honorary titles, as well as a magnificent residence and greater responsibilities. But Jia, throughout the siege of Xianyang – also in Hubei – by the Mongols, ignored both military affairs and affairs of state, held back information about the military situation, and refused to despatch reinforcements. Every day, instead, he just squatted down in his private residence in the Southern Song capital, Hangzhou, to watch cricket-fighting with his concubines. He was sent into exile after he suffered defeat in 1275 in an encounter with the Mongols. En route, he was killed by the commander of the detachment sent to accompany him. Thus ended a villainous minister whose name was disgraced for ever in history. But, considered purely as a cricket-fighting buff, he made valuable contributions to the sport by writing a book on cricket, the first of its kind, based on his personal experiences. His book, entitled *On Crickets*, is no longer extant; the edition now available is a supplement to the original in two volumes by Zhou Lujing of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644).

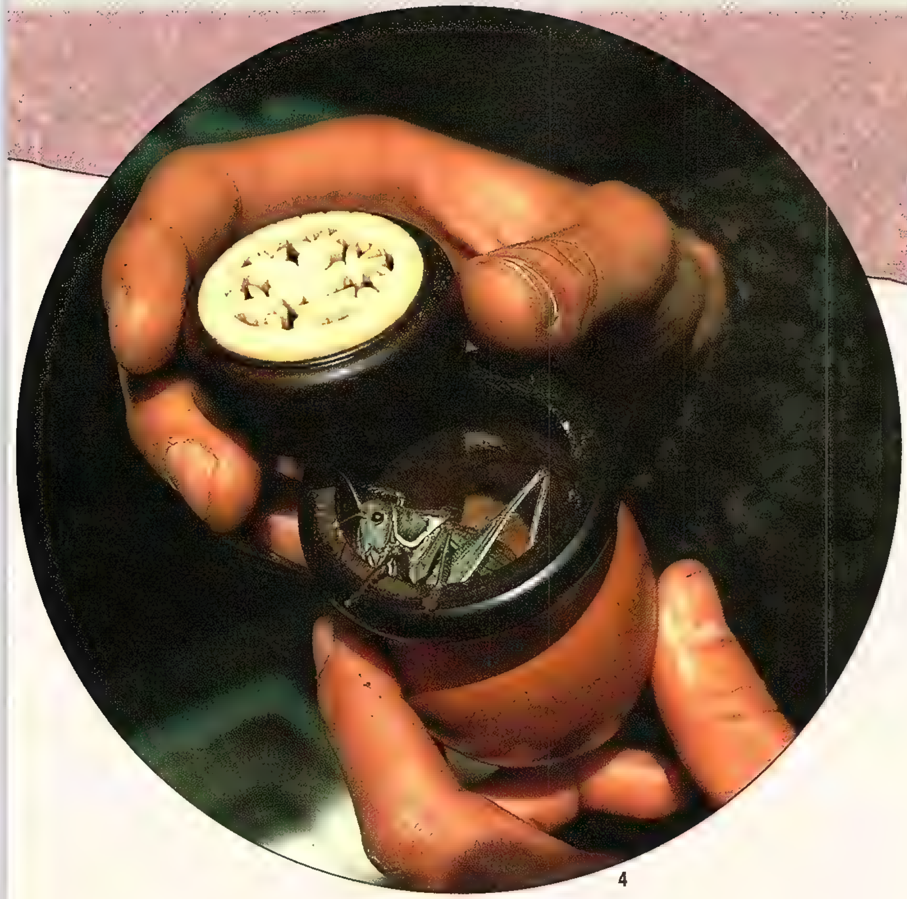
As the saying goes, when those in high places take a fancy to something, people under them are likely to become even more addicted to it. Enthusiasm for the sport of cricket-fighting soon spread to commoners. In his book *A Record of Prosperity by the Old Man of the West Lake*, Wu Zixiu of the Ming dynasty offers a description of the cricket market in the capital of the Southern Song: 'Every day in the morning,' he wrote, 'people buy and sell crickets, mostly at places north and south of Guanxiang Lane, often with some thirty or fifty major fights going on there. Villagers flock to catch crickets and go to the city to sell them. If one's cricket wins two or three games, the man expects to get one or two strings of cash; if his cricket is large and good at fighting, he can sell it for one tael of silver. Things go on like this every day until it starts to get cold as the ninth month is drawing to its end.'

Even monks took to cricket-fighting. For instance, the monk Ji Gong, a popular figure in Chinese folklore, is said to have kept a cricket with a white head and a blue back. This insect, with one antenna long and one short, was named King Iron Lance because of its prowess in fighting. Ji Gong even wrote a sentimental elegy on its death and scattered its ashes into a lake.

The Ming-dynasty Emperor Xuanzong (reign dates 1426–1435) was known as the 'Cricket Emperor'. The magistrate of Suzhou Prefecture, Kuang Zhong, was ordered to present him with 1,000 crickets every year as a tribute. The officers of the Suzhou garrison thus regarded catching crickets as part of their military career and for this they were entitled to keep their military rank from generation to generation.

In those days, crickets – 'enjoying a high position and living on clover' – were idolized. They were fed on expensive food and kept in carved porcelain jars made specially by well-known kilns. Meanwhile, the people at large were plagued by the demand for crickets and, to catch them, they 'all crowded in the grass, were all ears while walking to and fro, their faces expressionless as if they had lost something', and 'when chirping came out from a latrine, they would swiftly jump on the cricket like a hungry cat' (taken from the Ming-dynasty book *Keeping Crickets*). This craze for top-quality crickets was the cause of ruin for some unlucky families. Pu Songling (1640–1715), the great Qing-dynasty man of letters, in one of his short stories entitled 'The Cricket' from *Tales of Liaozhai*, relates how, in the time of Xuanzong, an innocent little boy almost succeeded in killing himself because he accidentally caused the death of a cricket his father was to present to the court.

Towards the close of the Ming dynasty, around 1644, there emerged another cricket fanatic, Ma Shiying. Ma, a man of the Jia Sidao type, and his cohorts founded the 'Southern Ming' in Nanjing, bringing eunuchs to power and discriminating against loyal Ming court officials. He proved to be a real scourge of the



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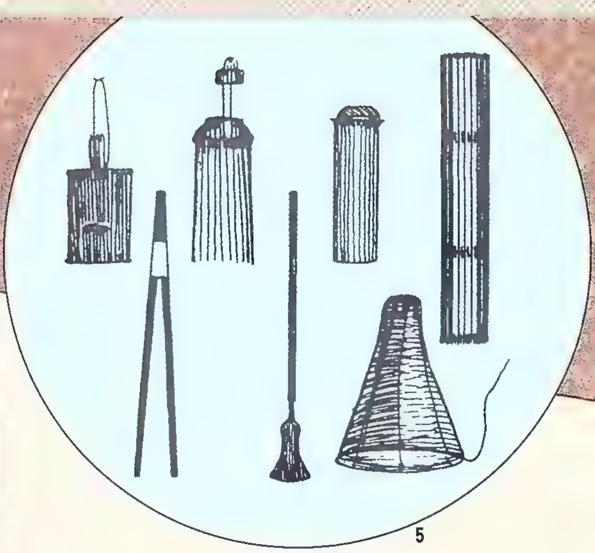

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nation. Wang Yingkui of the Qing dynasty in his *More Random Notes by Liu Nan* wrote: 'Ma Shiying was amusing himself with cricket-fighting even as urgent military despatches kept pouring in. For a while, people chose to refer to him as 'the Cricket Lord' ... And by the time the troops of the Great Qing had moved up to the river, the man in the palace was still looking for an aphrodisiac and actually ordering beggars to catch toads for him. The lantern the beggars used read 'Catching Toads by Order of His Majesty'. Alas, how could that dynasty not perish when the emperor was known as the Toad Son of Heaven, and his minister, the Cricket Lord?'

In the Ming dynasty, there was also an enthusiasm for cricket-fighting among the common folk. The book *On Crickets* says that, in the capital city, 'earthenware pots for keeping crickets were everywhere on the market and everyone, old and young, men and women, without exception amused themselves with cricket-fighting'. It was only at the time of the downfall of the Ming court, when Qing troops were about to enter through the Great Wall with the flames of war raging in the country, that cricket-fighting activities somewhat abated, but 'well-to-do, pampered young men and women were still indulging without let-up in cricket-fighting'.

The Manchu nobles of the Qing dynasty gradually came to enjoy this pastime of the Han Chinese after their conquest of China. The last Qing Emperor Puyi (1906–1967) as a young child, when bored, would ask the young eunuchs to show him his ancient porcelain pots in which crickets were kept. In Beijing, every autumn, with the Royal Textile Bureau (the Chinese word for 'cricket' involves the character for 'weaving') as sponsor, a large open space was fenced in and a notice set up with the rules governing entry to the cricket-fighting contest. In big cities such as Shanghai and Tianjin, too, there were cricket-fighting clubs. In Beijing, some rich and powerful families would hire skilled cricket-keepers to look after their treasured insects.

Cricket-fighting among the common people in the Qing dynasty, according to the reminiscences of elderly Beijing residents, took place with twenty-four pots as a unit; the crickets would be weighed before going into the 'arena' and would be graded according to their weight just like boxers are today. Only those of equal weight would be placed in a common container for a showdown. The stakes were confined to mooncakes, fruit and other eatables. Cricket-fighting continued to take place in Beijing, Shanghai, Suzhou and other cities until the time of the Japanese occupation.

Assessment by Colour and Appearance

From the point of view of entomology, the cricket is an insect of the family *Gryllidae* (order *Orthoptera*), cousin to the grasshopper. Fighting crickets belong to a particular species and only the males are bellicose, although individual crickets vary in their degree of aggressiveness.

It was an ancient belief that the environment in which a cricket lives is the major factor that determines its quality. Shanghai, Beijing, Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shandong all produce top-notch crickets. Liu Dong in his *Brief Notes on Scenes and Things in the Imperial Capital* wrote: 'Five *li* outside Yongdingmen Gate, there were food crops growing in profusion ... at Hu's Village, amidst the crops, in deserted monasteries, between numerous tombs, there were crickets which chirped loudly and were good at fighting, far, far better than those found elsewhere.' This shows that, as early as the Ming dynasty, Beijing was already well known for its crickets. Li Dachong of the Qing dynasty wrote: 'Crickets of the best quality come from places with magnificent topographical features, from soil which is neither too arid nor too wet.' He added: 'Those from Shatian outside Wuling's Bazimen Gate are 'genuine yellow', those from other places are not so good except for those found in the mountains.'

Champion crickets were recorded in special registers. The Qing-dynasty *Cricket Register* speaks of a cricket named Twin Flying Head which 'at Fengzhen Township defeated Scissors and Pincers of Shengze and has since become known far and wide in Jiangsu and Zhejiang.' Li Dachong wrote: 'Once upon a time, there was a man who kept a cricket named Red Child which had on its left wing a red spot as large as a sesame seed and as red as cinnabar. It fought with a cricket named White Placer Blue belonging to a monk from a monastery by the West Lake in Hangzhou and won.' This Red Child came from somewhere near Hangzhou and Twin Flying Head was known throughout Jiangsu and Zhejiang. Thus it is clear that these two provinces produced top fighting crickets. Small wonder that Qiliying in Shanghai to this day produces crickets of a fine type.

All the quality crickets were given a name in ancient registers, and over 180 were listed. From Mount Huangshan in Anhui, there is Sky Blue, alias Yellow Big Head, which looks like a dragonfly with a colour that 'glistens like the light of day'. From Nanjing come Black Yellow, Bright Yellow and Purple Head, from Yangzhou White Head with Blue Back and Oily Yellow, from Wuxi Blue Big Head. From a place north of present-day Hangzhou we have Golden Blue.

Song-dynasty earthenware gadgets for transferring crickets from pot to pot from the collection of the Zhanjiang Museum (2, supplied by Mo Rong), and Song painting of children cricket-fighting (1, copied by Li Yuanping). Ming blue-and-white porcelain cricket pot (3, supplied by Suzhou Antiques and Curios Store); gourd cricket jar with padauk and ivory top (4, by Chan Yat Nin); traditional cricket-hunting equipment (5).

From Hangzhou itself come Placer Yellow with Black Teeth, White Placer Blue, Red Chelae with Honey Back, and Genuine Black. From Wusong in Shanghai come Yellow Placer Purple and Light Blue Black.

Bodily shape and colour have always been important norms to determine the quality of a cricket. The skills of determining cricket physiognomy in the past were really amazing. In over a dozen books on crickets still extant, very specific details are given. To sum up, 'it must, generally speaking, have chelae like a centipede, a mouth like a lion, a head like a dragonfly, legs like a grasshopper; its colour must be just as good, and only one with a coarse appearance can be considered a good cricket.' As to its colour, 'white is not as good as black, black not as good as red, red not as good as yellow, and yellow not as good as blue' (taken from *On Crickets*). Later, Shi Lian of the Qing dynasty added: 'Blue is not as good as purple, while crickets with an oily bright colour are not as good as those with a pale, dull colour.'

However, each colour class produces its own champions. Of those which are blue in colour, there are the invincible Genuine Blue and Great General, more commonly known as Red Child. Of the yellow ones there is Purple Yellow, which is 'one in a thousand', and 'any cricket bitten by it falls into a dazed state', and Red Yellow, 'prized in those days by Jia Sidao'. Of the reds, we can list Cinnabar Head, which 'scares all other crickets stiff' and Red Head with White Wings, which 'fights on from mid-autumn to late autumn'. Of the black ones, there is Dark Blue, which is 'as formidable as a thunderclap in an engagement' and Black Head with Silvery Wings, which 'is prized by all and fights on throughout the autumnal days'. Of the whites, we can mention Genuine White, nicknamed Silvery Armour, and Purple White, which is 'one in a thousand'. Of the purples, there is Purple Golden Wings which 'bites all other autumnal crickets to death and causes people to turn pale with fright' and Genuine Purple, which 'alone makes a name for itself throughout the autumn days'. All the above quotes are from the various cricket registers.

On Crickets states: 'Those with a red or white head, those with a blue neck and golden wings, as well as those with golden and silvery crossbands on the forehead, are graded first class, next come the yellow heads, next again the purple, gold and black ones.' It goes on to say: 'Not one full-coloured purple yellow can be found among ten crickets' while Li Dachong said: 'Not a single genuine purple yellow can be found in a thousand.'

As to the appearance of a cricket, the head must be red as a bead on a tassel; the crown, yellow as gold; the forehead should have golden or silvery bands on it; the neck must be thick and covered with blue bristles; the golden wings must have folds on them; the whole body must be yellow or white like bee's wax; the legs must be long and strong with blood-red claws; the body must be tall and thick with chelae of red or white. A cricket with a body like that of a centipede is supposed to be the king of all crickets. In ancient times, based on the theory that everything transforms itself into something else, people believed that this kind of cricket was a variety of centipede.

It is regrettable that, although writers of the past have given us so many details about the shape and colour of crickets, they have not left us any specimens! A Qing-dynasty cricket pot of blue and white porcelain now in the custody of the Beijing Museum depicts several species of cricket. These are thus far the most delicate and realistic paintings we have of fighting crickets.

Shi Lian of the Qing dynasty once kept a cricket named Red Teeth Blue, which had a square, thick body, a broad neck, and a round black head and red chelae. Every time it fought, its rival was routed in a single combat. Now, there was a nobleman who owned a formidable cricket named Black Tiger of peerless ferocity; it was known as the bravest of all crickets. This nobleman challenged Red Teeth Blue to a contest. When the two crickets were placed in the pot, the onlookers anticipated a real fight so when Black Tiger, swollen with arrogance, jumped on Red Teeth Blue, they were breathless with anxiety for the fate of the latter. But, surprisingly, the moment the two insects met, teeth against teeth, Black Tiger at once turned to retreat. Red Teeth Blue took part in many more contests and emerged victorious, defeating some three hundred rivals. Shi Lian's friends all wrote poems in his praise, lauding him for being able to spot a real hero from among so many crickets. This was the basis for his reputation as a cricket expert.

Pots and Ticklers

In catching crickets, special apparatus is needed. This includes a spade 'in the shape of an apricot leaf' for digging, a hand trap for catching crickets, containers and clips. One must search in different places for crickets according to the season. Thus, 'in early autumn, go and look for crickets in fields of green grass; in mid-autumn, in gardens and on walls and look for the hide-out by listening to the chirping and working out where it is comes from. When you have made sure where the cricket is, use a blade of grass to lure it out of its hiding place. If it refuses to come out, pour water into its burrow until it leaps out. See whether it is a male one, whether it is of good or poor quality. If it is one with two hind-wings, of a proper colour, is stout-bodied, complete in every part of its body, catch it by all means and put it into a carrying cage' (Jia Zhouben: *On Crickets*). If the cricket is hidden among bricks and rocks, under a wall, in an opening on a rock, or somewhere on a mound, try and entice it out with a shallow tile or something else and so catch it undamaged.

People who have considerable experience in cricket-keeping find that a male cricket which has just mated is more valiant and more skilled in fighting; this was always one of the factors taken into consideration in predicting the outcome of a fight, because a cricket with normal sexual power is at the height of its vitality. Those which are aging, weak or physically unfit are no match for it. Moreover, when it is stirred up to fight, it will mistake the other cricket for a rival in courting a female, hence a fight to the death results.

Cricket-fighting may take place in a cricket pot or jar or in a special fighting box called a *ce*. Li Dachong however, wrote: 'Never let crickets fight in a jar, for there a cricket may lose without putting up a real fight; whereas in a *ce* the outcome of a fight is genuine.' A formal contest in ancient times often took place in a *ce*, which may be made of bamboo or paper. It is about fifteen centimetres high with a diameter of over twenty centimetres. In the middle of it is a movable partition; when this is raised, the two

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fighting crickets confront each other. When fighting takes place on a severely cold winter's day, a double-tier *ce* made of tin is used – hot water is put in the lower tier to keep the 'arena' warm.

Other bits and bobs for cricket-fighting include a small balance for weighing crickets and a young reed shoot, bristle or rat's whisker as a 'tickler'. The latter was used as an irritant to induce the cricket to fight, first tickling the hind-wings, then its legs, and finally its jaws. After the first round, the losing side lightly whisks its cricket's head, back, sides and cerci with a downy shoot of reed to make it hold its ground and hopefully turn the tables; the winning side will also tickle theirs from time to time to keep it fierce.

The pots, jars and cages used at court or in a rich family for housing fighting crickets were usually exquisite. At the Tang court, tiny gold cages were used; ranking officials and noblemen used carved ivory cages. In the Song dynasty, there was the Xuanhe pot; in the imperial household, there were pots inlaid with jewels, in addition to the so-called *pingzhang* pots. These were all decorated with patterns of animals, dragons, lotus, crab-apple or plum blossoms, storks and so on. Jia Sidao had his pots inlaid with gold, jade and gems and decorated with abstract patterns. In the Yuan dynasty, there was the Zhide pot. In the Ming dynasty there were the Yongle and Xuande pots, most splendid, decorated with twin dragons, flowers and birds, phoenix, crane, lotus flower, stork, deer, landscape, drifting clouds and human figures, inlaid with gems or embellished with gold and jade, either square or round in shape, and in various sizes. Zuiming Chiren's imitations of Jia Sidao's cricket pots were made of a kind of clay with decorative patterns of two dragons playing with a pearl. The clay pots made in the Qing dynasty were painted with waves and clouds and dragons playing with a pearl. Some precious cricket pots of the Ming and Qing dynasties can be seen at the Beijing Museum. The accessories – the feeding dishes and cricket 'bowers' or shelters – were also often minor works of art.

Generally speaking, the pots used by commoners were fairly plain. In the Song dynasty, there were earthenware pots, bamboo and wooden cages, and cages painted either black, gold or silver, or made of filigree silver. In the Ming and Qing dynasties, only earthenware pots were used. Zou Shuwen, an entomologist of the present day, has written: 'Crickets were first kept in gold or ivory cages, which were later on replaced by earthenware pots, not for the sake of frugality, but as a result of a better understanding of the habits and characteristics of crickets.' This is because coarse earthenware pots absorb moisture to provide humidity that is good for crickets. Since the Song dynasty, though there have been various kinds of cricket pots inlaid with pearls, jade and gold, or painted, these were merely to show off the owner's wealth and position, used mainly for fighting or for keeping crickets in temporarily. Normally, crickets lived in earthenware pots.

Crickets are omnivorous. They eat grain, beans, vegetables and even smaller insects. According to the various cricket registers, they may eat over forty kinds of things in addition to some twenty medicinal herbs. In ancient times, people thought the more expensive and more particular the food for crickets, the stronger they would grow. Thus, they would feed them on persimmons, but only those with a square calyx; on fresh shrimps, but only blue ones; on chestnuts boiled, not fried with sugar as sold normally in the market; on crab flesh taken only from the main claws of female crabs; on mosquitos or insects fresh with blood; on the back of an eel; and on tea or a liquid concoction of many medicinal herbs. In actual fact, crickets are fond of the delicate part of plants which contain sugar and protein, including the roots. Field crickets are destructive insects, causing serious damage to crops. Farmers detest them!

Translated by Ren Jiazhen

Glass jar to permit close examination (1) and reed 'tickler' to encourage crickets to fight (3) (both by Chan Yat Nin). Qing-dynasty New Year picture (2, copied by Li Yuanping), and 15.5-centimetre-high Qing cricket pot from the Beijing Museum depicting crickets among orchid sprays (4).

Editor's note: In November 1989 the writers of this article jointly published a book entitled *Cricket-Fighting*, with comprehensive coverage of aspects of cricket-keeping in ancient China. This book, currently available only in Chinese, is published by the Science and Technology Publications Press, Beijing 100038.

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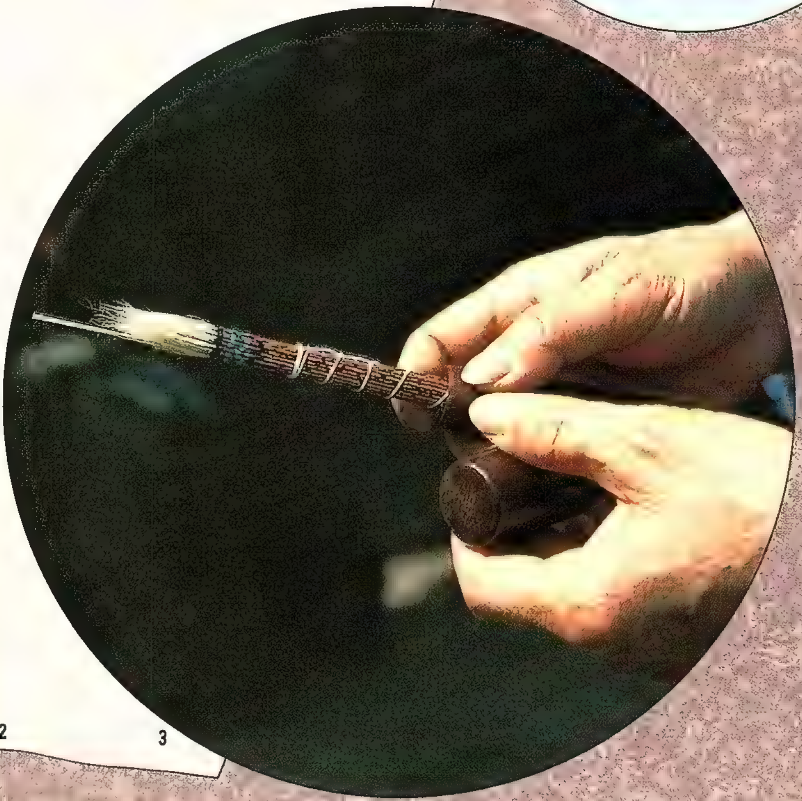
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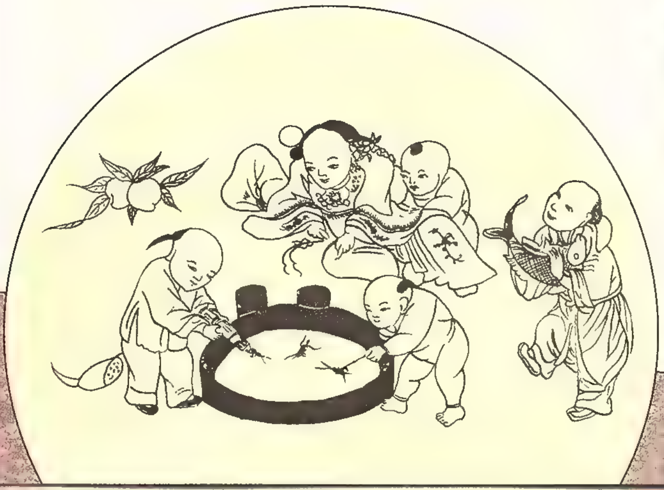
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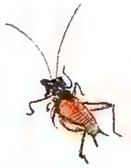
The Cricket



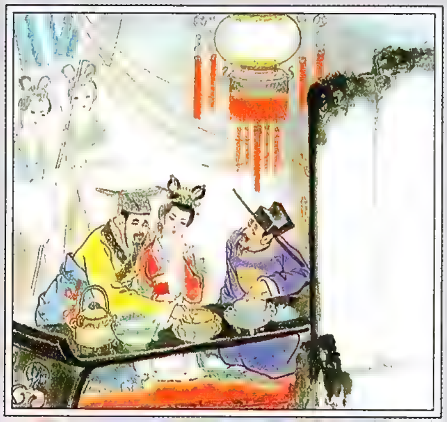
The *Tales of Liaozhai* by Pu Songling (1640–1715) is now considered a Chinese classic. Throughout his life, which bridged the Ming and Qing dynasties, Pu Songling — a native of Shandong's Zichuan — cultivated his hobby of collecting folk tales and popular legends and anecdotes which formed the basis for his tales; the first edition of his major work in 1766 contained no less than 431 stories. The earliest English translation was *Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio* by H. Giles in 1916.

Many of these tales involve inexplicable happenings and supernatural beings — fox-fairies, ghosts and other spirits, often endowed with human qualities. Such elements have a long history in Chinese storytelling, going back at least as far as the Tang and Song dynasties (618–1279).

Very different from the romantic love story between a human and a fairy, also by Pu Songling, which we published in CHINA TOURISM no. 110, *The Cricket* reflects the genuine burden imposed on many ordinary people in sundry parts of the country as a result of the fighting cricket craze of the Ming and Qing dynasties. This story takes place during the Xuande reign (1426–1435) of the Ming. Typical of Pu Songling is the postscript in which he makes his own personal comment — often an ironic one.

* * *

During the reign of Xuan De, cricket fights were popular at court and a levy of crickets was exacted every year. Now these insects were scarce in the province of Shaanxi, but the magistrate of Huayin – to get into the good books of the governor – presented a cricket which proved a remarkable fighter. So much so that his county was commanded to present crickets regularly and the magistrate ordered his bailiffs to produce them. Then young fellows in town began to keep good crickets and demand high prices for them, while the crafty bailiffs seized this chance to make money. Thus each cricket they collected was the ruin of several households.

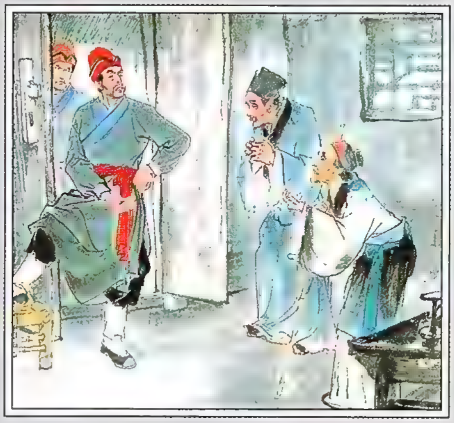


Now in this town lived a scholar named Cheng Ming, who had failed repeatedly in the district examination. This slow-witted pedant was appointed beadle on the recommendation of the crooked bailiff and could not evade this service hard as he tried. In less than a year his small patrimony was exhausted. Then came another levy of crickets. Cheng dared not extort money from the country folk but neither could he pay the sum himself. At his wit's end, he longed to die.

"What good would dying do?" demanded his wife. "You had better go out and look for a cricket yourself. There is just one chance in ten thousand that you may catch one."

Cheng agreed. With a bamboo tube and wire cage he searched from dawn till dusk among ruins and waste land, peering under rocks and exploring crevices, leaving no stone unturned – but all in vain. The two or three crickets he caught were poor specimens which did not come up to standard. The magistrate set him a time limit and beat him when he failed, till in little more than ten days he had received some hundred strokes and his legs were so covered with sores that he could not continue his search. Tossing painfully on his bed, his one thought was to die.

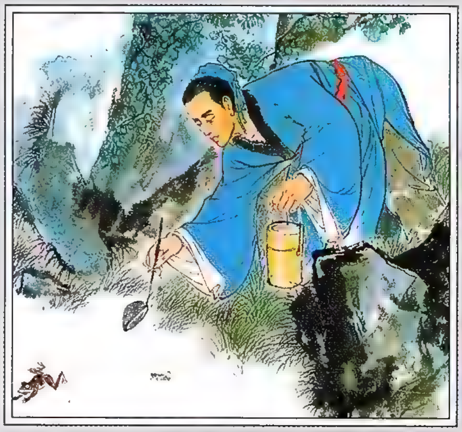
Then to their village came a hump-backed diviner who could tell fortunes by consulting spirits. Cheng's wife, taking money, went to ask his advice. She found his gate thronged with pink, blooming girls and white-haired old women. Entering, she saw a curtain before the inner room, with incense on a table in front of it. Those come to ask their fortune burned incense in a tripod and kowtowed. The diviner prayed beside them, staring into space, but though his lips moved no one knew what it was he said and all listened respectfully. Finally a slip of paper was tossed from the inner room with the answer to the question asked – an answer which invariably proved correct.



Cheng's wife put her money on the table, burned incense and kowtowed like the other women. Presently the curtain moved and a piece of paper fluttered to the ground. Instead of writing it had a painting of a building like a temple with a small hill behind covered with rocks of every shape and overgrown with thorns. A cricket was crouching there while beside it a toad was making ready to spring. She had no idea what this meant, but the cricket at least had some connection with their problem. Accordingly she folded the paper and took it home to her husband.

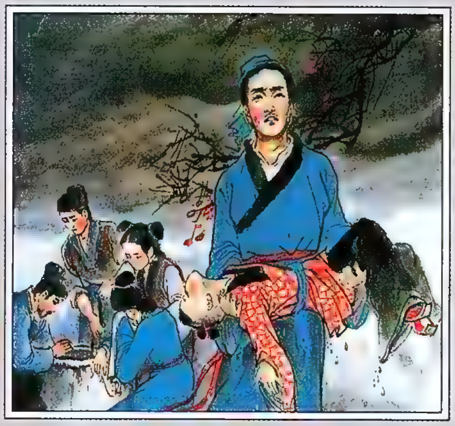
Cheng wondered. "Is this supposed to show me where I should look for a cricket?"

On examining the picture closely, he recognized Great Buddha Monastery east of the village. So taking the paper with him, he struggled along with the help of a stick to the back of the monastery. There he found an old grave overgrown with brambles. Skirting this, he saw that the stones lying scattered around were exactly like the painting. He pricked up his ears and limped slowly through the brambles, but he might just as well have been looking for a needle or a grain of mustard-seed. Though he strained every nerve he found nothing. As he was groping around, a toad hopped into sight. Cheng gave a start and hurried after it. The toad slipped into the undergrowth and, following it, he saw a cricket at the root of a bramble. He snatched at it but the cricket leapt into a crevice in a rock and would not come out though he prodded it with a straw. Not till he poured water on it, did it emerge. It seemed a fine specimen and he picked it up. Seen close to, it had a large body and long tail, dark neck and golden wings, and he was a happy man as he carried it home in the cage to delight his household, who considered it more precious than the rarest jade. The cricket was kept in a pot and fed upon white crab's flesh and the yellow kernel of chestnuts, tended with loving care till such time



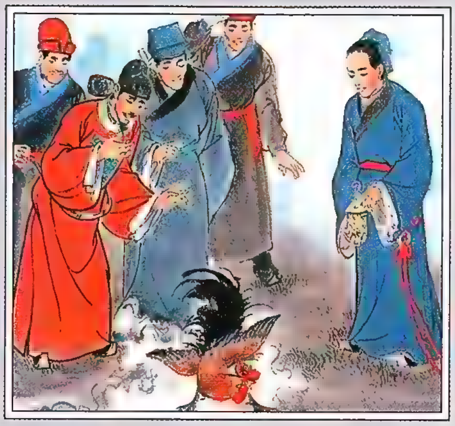
as the magistrate should ask for it.

Now Cheng had a son of nine, who uncovered this pot on the sly while his father was out. At once the cricket jumped out and sprang about so nimbly that he could not catch it. Finally the boy grabbed it, but in doing so tore off a leg and crushed it so that the next moment it died. The frightened child ran crying to his mother. When she heard what had happened she turned as pale as death.



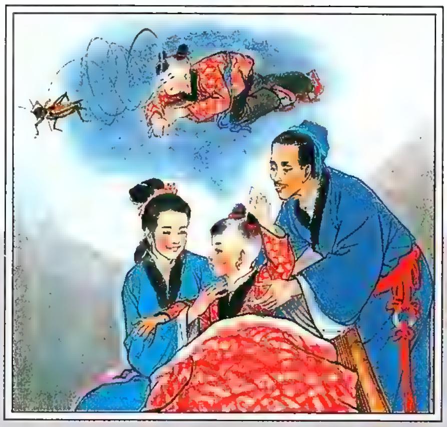
"You wicked boy!" she cried. "You'll catch it when your father comes home!"

Her son went off in tears. Soon Cheng came back and when he heard his wife's story he felt as if he had been turned to ice. In a passion he searched for his son, who was nowhere to be found until at last they discovered his body in the well. Then anger turned to sorrow. Cheng cried out in anguish and longed to kill himself. Husband and wife sat with their faces to the wall in their thatched and smokeless cottage in silent despair. As the sun began to set he prepared to bury the boy, but upon touching the child found there was still breath in him. Overjoyed, he laid the small body on the couch, and towards the middle of the night the child came round. Cheng and his wife began to breathe again, but their son remained in a trance with drooping eyelids. The sight of the empty cricket cage brought back Cheng's grief, but he dared not scold the child now. He did not close his eyes all night, and as the sun rose in the east he was still lying in stark despair when a cricket chirped outside the door. He rose in amazement to look, and sure enough there was a cricket. He clutched at it, but it chirped and hopped away. He put his hands over it but to no avail: when he turned up his palms the cricket escaped again. So he chased it up and down till it disappeared round the corner of the wall, and while searching for it he discovered another cricket on the wall. But this was a little, dark red insect, not to be compared with the first. Deciding that it was too small to be worth catching, Cheng looked round again for the one he had lost. At once the small cricket hopped from the wall to his sleeve, and he saw it resembled a mole-cricket with speckled wings, a square head and long legs – it might be a good one. So he was glad to keep it.



Cheng meant to present this cricket to the yamen, but fearing that it might not do he decided first to give it a trial fight. Now a young fellow in that village had a cricket called Crab Blue which had beaten every other insect it fought, and its owner wanted such an exorbitant price for it that it had remained on his hands. This man called on Cheng and laughed to see his cricket, producing his own for comparison. At the sight of this large, handsome insect, Cheng felt even more diffident and dared not offer a fight. The young man, however, insisted on a match; and since his poor cricket was useless in any case Cheng thought he might as well sacrifice it for a laugh. So the two combatants were put in one basin, where the small one crouched motionless as a stick of wood. The young man laughed heartily and prodded it with a pig's bristle, but still it made no move. At that he laughed louder and louder until at last the cricket was roused to fury. It hurled itself at its opponent, attacking savagely. In an instant it had leapt forward with bristling tail and seized the other by the neck. The horrified young man made haste to separate the two contestants, while the little cricket chirped proudly as if to announce its victory to its master. Cheng was glorying in this sight when a cock bore down on the cricket and pecked at it. Cheng gave a cry, rooted to the ground in horror; but luckily the cock missed the small cricket which leapt a foot or more away. The cock gave chase, the cricket was under its claws. Cheng, unable to intervene, stamped his foot and turned pale. But the next thing he knew the cock was flapping its wings and craning its neck – his cricket had fastened its teeth in the cock's comb. Amazed and exultant, he put the cricket back in its cage.

Later Cheng presented this cricket to the magistrate, who abused him angrily for producing one so small. Refusing to believe Cheng's account of the little creature's exploits, the magistrate pitted it against some other crickets and it defeated them all. He tried it with a cock, and again it turned out exactly as Cheng had said. Then the magistrate rewarded Cheng and presented this cricket to the governor, who put it in a golden cage and sent it joyfully to the emperor with a detailed report of its prowess.



In his palace the emperor tried the cricket with Butterfly, Praying Mantis, Yolita, Green Forehead and many other champions, but none was a match for it. And he prized it even more highly when he found that it would dance in time to music. In high good humour, he rewarded the governor with fine steeds and silk garments. And the governor, not forgetting where the cricket came from, within a short time commended the magistrate for outstanding merit. The magistrate, pleased in his turn, exempted Cheng from his duties and ordered the local examiner to see that he passed the next examination.

A year later Cheng's son was restored to his senses. He said, "I dreamed I was a cricket, a quick, good fighter. Now I have woken up."

The governor also rewarded Cheng so handsomely that within a few years he owned vast estates, whole streets of houses and countless flocks and herds. When he went abroad, his furs and carriage were more splendid than a noble's.

The recorder of these marvels comments: The emperor may do a thing once and forget it afterwards, but those who carry out his orders make this a general rule. Then when officials are greedy for profit and their underlings are bullies, men are driven to sell their wives and children. This shows that since each step an emperor takes is fraught with consequence for his subjects it behoves him to be very careful. This man Cheng, first impoverished by rapacious officials, grew so rich thanks to a cricket that he went about in magnificent carriages and furs. He can never have dreamed of such good fortune when he was a beadle and was being beaten! Because Heaven wished to reward an honest man, the governor and magistrate also benefited from the cricket. It is true, as the ancients said: "When a man becomes immortal and soars to heaven, his chickens and dog attain immortality too."

Translated by Yang Xianyi & Gladys Yang
Illustrated by Huang Hongyi

Taken from *Selected Tales of Liaozhai* and reproduced by kind permission of Panda Books, Chinese Literature Press, Beijing

FASHION ON 'NEW SILK ROAD'

EDITOR'S NOTE: We are pleased to introduce a new occasional column with a China trade slant but on topics of interest to our general readership.

Guangdong Province has always been relatively open to influences from the outside world. The provincial capital, Guangzhou, has been a great trading port for centuries. China's earliest mosque was built there in 650 during the Tang dynasty, witness to the large Arab trading community.

In modern times, Guangzhou was again the first place to establish international trading links, long before China's 'open-door' policy was implemented; the Guangzhou Trade Fair has been in existence since 1956. These trade fairs held twice

a year – in spring and autumn – act as a showcase for products and goods in every conceivable field from all over China.

In recent years, with the more general opening-up, the fair has become less important as other, more direct ways of engaging in international trade have been pursued. Nevertheless, this is still a major event for Guangzhou. The hotels burst their seams as upwards of 30,000 visitors from outside the mainland and over 10,000 traders and officials from all over China pour into the city, and the fair overflows beyond the 130,000 square metres of its exhibition grounds.

This April, the 67th Chinese Export Commodities Fair (to give it its full official name) sprouted a number of offshoots in leading hotels as China's major textiles and clothing manufacturers found these more fitting venues for their fashion shows. One show which took place at the White Swan Hotel on Shamian Island (the foreign traders' enclave from 1859 to the 1940s) was a joint presentation by the Guangdong branch of the China National Silk Import and Export Corporation (Guangdong Silk) and Guangdong-Lyon Trading Co. Ltd.

The latter is a joint venture between Guangdong Silk and J. Brochier Soieries of France; the French partner provides production technology, designs and international sales channels, while Guangdong Silk imports advanced machinery from abroad and provides premises and labour. In the five years since it was established, the joint-venture company has boosted the development of silk production in Guangdong Province and its products are finding an increasing market worldwide.

The hour-long 'New Silk Road Fashion Show' on five consecutive evenings in the White Swan's International Banquet Hall proved to be a feast of silk fashions presented by some of China's top models. It featured casual wear and beach wear, silk knitwear, hand-painted and silk batik garments, delicately beaded silk garments and even a bridal gown section. The spectacular first half included a collection for the Chinese Arts & Crafts chain stores by leading Hong Kong designer Eddie Lau, as well as collections by the Japanese designers Kayo Kuniba, Sadako Inoue, Eiko Makamaki and Eiko Tanaka. The second part of the programme featured fifty-six ensembles by mainland designers such as Ma Dali, Zheng Hong and Liao Yuanjie.

Favoured by its climate, Guangdong has long been known for its silk production and associated industries. Over the years, the quality of silk cocoons has improved dramatically and the industry in general has shown steady growth, helped more recently by the importation of advanced equipment and modern technology.

The volume of exports has risen significantly. In 1989, Guangdong's silk output was worth almost one billion Yuan, and the value of silk goods exported exceeded US$200 million, of which silk garments accounted for more than US$100 million. The province has nearly one hundred factories involved in processing silk garments for export, and the exports go to over fifty countries and regions. Guangdong Silk itself, which handles production, purchasing, exports, imports and domestic sales of silk in Guangdong, has sub-branches in no less than thirty-two cities and county towns in the province.

As a showcase for top international designers working in tandem with producers of top-quality fabrics, the 'New Silk Road Fashion Show' was a stunning demonstration of what China's silk industry is now capable of ... with a little help from its friends.

PHOTOS BY LI JIANCHENG

遠東傢具

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Date: **25-28 October 1990**

Time: 10 am — 5:30 pm

Venue: Museum of Chinese Historical Relics
China Resources Building
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Organizer: HK China Tourism Press

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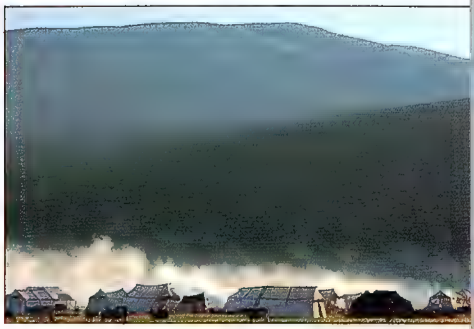
LAND OF THE DRAGON



Into the Changbai Mountains

As we have seen in our Special Features articles, the Changbai Mountains sprawl along the Sino-North Korean border in Jilin Province. The highest mountain, Baitou, comprises sixteen peaks covering a total of 8,000 square kilometres – from Fusong in the west to Helong in the east, and from Antu in the north deep into North Korea.

The best time to visit is during the summer and autumn, from June to September, when the access roads are open. July and August offer ideal weather conditions.

One way of approaching the area is by train from Shenyang or Changchun via Tonghua to the end of the line at Erdao Baihe, then by bus to Tianchi. It is also possible to alight at Songjianghe (the railway station for Fusong) on this same line, and take a day trip into the heart of the mountains. The other approach is also via Erdao Baihe, but from the north – from Antu on the Changchun-Tumen railway line. This entails a very much longer bus ride.

Special-interest tours available in the Changbai Mountains include walking, photography, hot-spring therapy, ginseng-hunting, botanical studies, and more. But the major focus of any trip into the area is on the following scenic highlights:

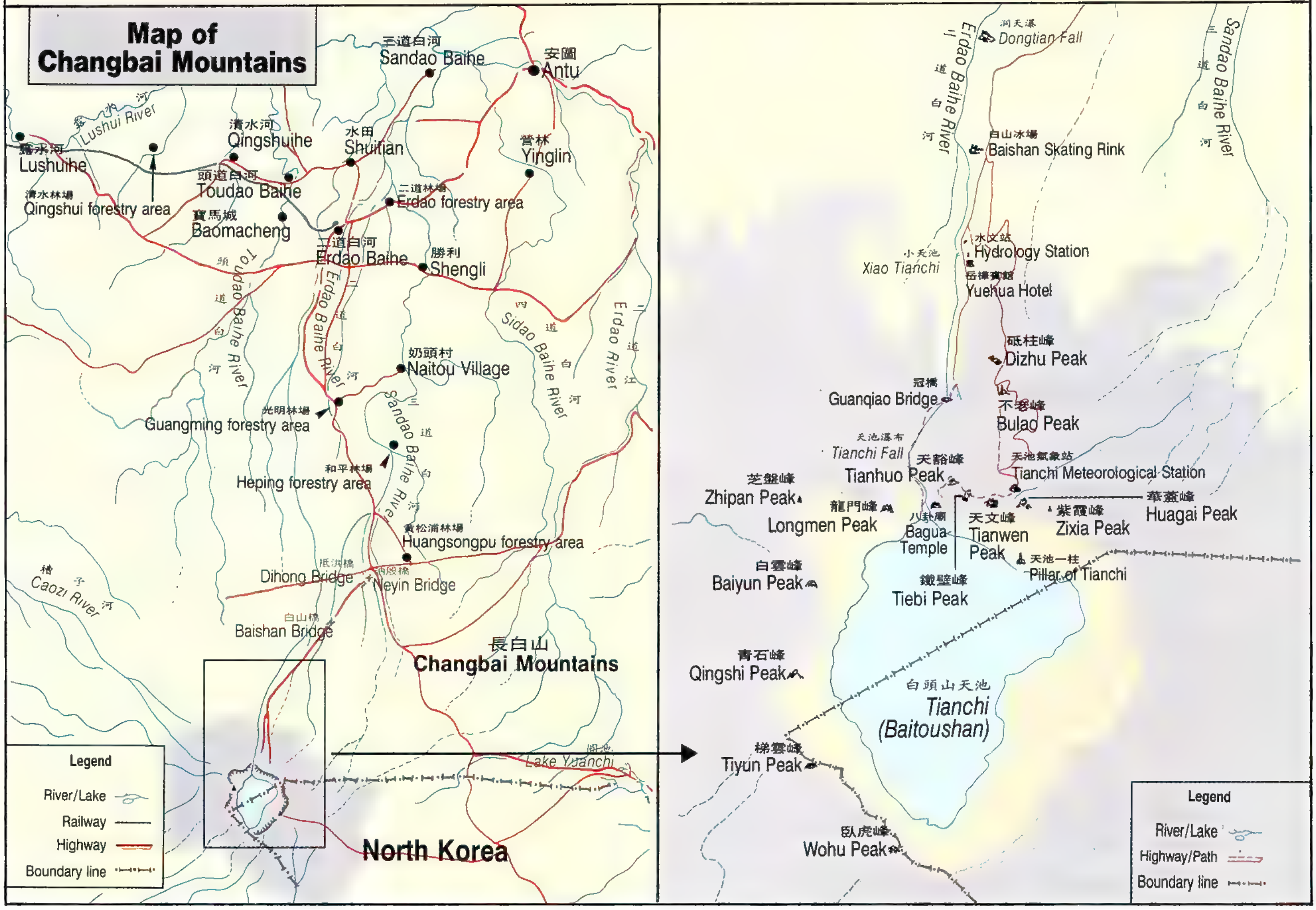
Tianchi (Lake of Heaven) The volcanic crater lake set at 2,194 metres above sea-level is bisected by the Sino-North Korean border.

Yuanchi (Round Lake) Further east, this too is of volcanic origin. See 'Changbai Legends in Papercuts' in this issue for the charming legend which links this lake with the ancestor of the Manchu people. The Qing imperial court apparently used to send representatives here every year to pay homage to their ancestor.

Changbai Fall Exiting on the north-eastern side of Lake Tianchi, the River Chengcha flows for only around a kilometre before dropping 68 metres in this giant cascade, the headwaters of the River Songhua.

Hot springs There are thirteen of these covering an area of 1,000 square metres on the banks of the Second Baihe River. Their temperature ranges from 37 to 82°C and bathhouses have been erected over some of them.

Historical monuments Not surprisingly, given the area's reputation as the 'cradle of the Manchus', there are considerable numbers of ancient structures scattered in the vicinity of Tianchi, including the Nüzhen Sacrificial Altar, one metre high and four square metres in size, built from large stones of various colours on the huge Turtle Angling Terrace below Zixia (Purple Cloud) Peak. It was one of the branches of the Nüzhen tribe which took the name Manchu in the seventeenth century.


Map of Changbai Mountains
三道白河 Sandao Baihe
安圖 Antu
露水河 Lushuihe
露水河 Lushui River
清水河 Qingshuihe
水田 Shuitian
營林 Yinglin
頭道白河 Toudao Baihe
清水林場 Qingshui forestry area
寶馬城 Baomacheng
二道林場 Erdao forestry area
二道白河 Erdao Baihe
勝利 Shengli
頭道白河 Toudao Baihe River
二道白河 Erdao Baihe River
四道白河 Sidao Baihe River
二道江 Erdao River
奶頭村 Naitou Village
光明林場 Guangming forestry area
三道白河 Sandao Baihe River
和平林場 Heping forestry area
黃松浦林場 Huangsongpu forestry area
抵洪橋 Dihong Bridge
內設橋 Neyin Bridge
槽子河 Caozi River
白山橋 Baishan Bridge
長白山 Changbai Mountains
圓池 Lake Yuanchi
North Korea
Legend
River/Lake
Railway
Highway
Boundary line
洞天瀑 Dongtian Fall
二道白河 Erdao Baihe River
三道白河 Sandao Baihe River
白山冰場 Baishan Skating Rink
小天池 Xiao Tianchi
水文站 Hydrology Station
岳樺賓館 Yuehua Hotel
砥柱峰 Dizhu Peak
冠橋 Guanqiao Bridge
不老峰 Bulao Peak
天池瀑布 Tianchi Fall
天豁峰 Tianhuo Peak
天池氣象站 Tianchi Meteorological Station
芝盤峰 Zhipan Peak
龍門峰 Longmen Peak
八卦廟 Bagua Temple
天文峰 Tianwen Peak
紫霞峰 Zixia Peak
華蓋峰 Huagai Peak
天池一柱 Pillar of Tianchi
白雲峰 Baiyun Peak
鐵壁峰 Tiebi Peak
青石峰 Qingshi Peak
白頭山天池 Tianchi (Baitoushan)
梯雲峰 Tiyun Peak
臥虎峰 Wohu Peak
Legend
River/Lake
Highway/Path
Boundary line

Travels Around Tianchi

My journey started from the capital of Jilin Province, Changchun. I took the train to Yanji, capital of the Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture, from where I continued by car to Erdao Baihe in Antu County – a three-day journey on a very rough road.

From Erdao Baihe to Lake Tianchi involves a journey of more than fifty kilometres through the forest. Some people take public transport as far as Erdao Baihe, then hire a car or a donkey-cart. The latter is very pleasant; it puts half a day extra on your itinerary, though.

Lodgings

The Meirensong Guesthouse in Erdao Baihe is the biggest of the guesthouses in the Changbai region. The Tianchi Mountain Villa where I stayed for the first night is managed by the Yanbian Travel Bureau. It is about forty minutes by car from Erdao Baihe. This is the newest guesthouse in the Changbai Mountains, opened only in 1989. It is like a mountain lodge in appearance, but very comfortable inside with good service. It stands among silver birches. Not far away is a newly discovered scenic area of lava and pumice-stone formations with a viewing terrace.

The highest guesthouse on the mountain is the Yuehua Hotel, which consists of simple buildings with share rooms without private bath or toilet, and single-storey villas with more facilities, usually reserved for foreign travellers. The Yuehua Hotel is only half an hour's walk from the Changbai Waterfall and the hot spring area. This hotel is in high demand, and it and the Tianchi Mountain Villa are always fully booked during the peak tourist season.

The Time to Go

The peak tourist season runs from June to September.

I chose to visit in September, during the autumn. The leaves are red like fire then, the silver birch leaves are golden-yellow, and the tundra zone on the peak has become a carpet of brownish-red colour. From mid-September, it starts snowing again then, in October, Lake Tianchi freezes over, and the roads start to be closed to transport. Most of the people employed in the local tourism industry go home for the winter, since the temperature on Mount Baitou can reach −40°C in December.

However, skiers and other winter sports enthusiasts do still venture into the mountains. There is a cableway to take people up to the ski slopes.

Various Routes – and Warnings

The region around the Yuehua Hotel can be viewed as the starting point for the final ascent. It is about twelve kilometres to Tianwen Peak from here, which takes about two and a half hours of fast walking. There is a motorable road to the observatory on Tianwen Peak, so the climb is very easy. The view of all the peaks surrounding the lake as seen from Tianwen Peak is especially grand.

A shorter way to reach the lake is from the Changbai Fall, which normally takes about one and a half hours on foot. But this is a very difficult and dangerous ascent because there are frequent rockfalls. If you are in a group, you have to watch out that those at the front do not dislodge rocks. It is wise to keep a certain distance between group members. Never climb the mountain by this route after heavy or protracted rainfall.

N.B. You should stock up on water and dried food, because there is no food anywhere except in the guesthouses. In addition, you should bring warm clothes (even in mid-summer, a sweater or down jacket is necessary) and rainwear. The mountain's weather is fickle and it only takes a minute for a sunny day to become a rainy one. But umbrellas are out – the wind is usually gale force!

The Changbai Mountains are not all that high, but sixteen of the peaks surrounding Lake Tianchi exceed 2,600 metres (Mount Huangshan in Anhui is 1,800 metres high, Mount Emei in Sichuan 3,000 metres). A small number of people may be affected by mountain sickness, so you should proceed slowly and with care.

Never go into the forest on your own. It is imperative to have a local guide and to take a compass. However, according to hearsay, there are only around ten Manchurian tigers left, and the black bear, wild boar, leopard and lynx have all but died out.

Fire is something to be dreaded in forests, so it is forbidden to smoke in the Changbai Mountains (smoking is only permitted inside the guesthouses). A plea to the smoker: for the sake of this precious nature reserve – **please don't smoke!**

Shopping

Of all the specialties of the Changbai region, ginseng and pilose antler are the two most favoured by travellers. I compared prices in cities in northeastern China, in Hong Kong and at the sight-seeing points, and discovered that the Hong Kong prices are much higher. I bought many products at a deer enclosure, as well as ginseng at ginseng farms in Fusong and Tonghua. Cultivated ginseng is very low-priced, and is even used in a typical local dish – caramelized!

Chan Yat Nin

Translated by Annette Lee

Tours from Tonghua

The Tonghua, Jilin, branch of China International Travel Service (CITS) has devised some tours of one to three days' duration. These include the following:

1. **One-day tour of Tonghua**
   Visits to Yuhuangshan Park, a winery, stores selling local specialities, a fur factory (selling garments made from natural and synthetic furs). In the evening, a banquet in the company of Korean elders.

   In the winter, options include skiing on Mount Longtou, which has a cable-car (equipment available locally); skating on Mount Xishan; horse-riding; and visiting Yuhuangshan Park to admire the trees covered with snow and ice.
2. **Two-day tour of Tonghua**
   This also includes a ride on a steam train or a lumber freight train with the possibility of taking some unique photos.
3. **One-day tour to the 'Kingdom of Ginseng'**
   Visit a ginseng farm in the Changbai Mountains and the tomb of Sun Liang, the legendary ginseng-searching master. Go to Mount Bangchui and search for wild ginseng.
4. **One or two-day tour to Ji'an**
   Ji'an lies 117 kilometres south of Tonghua, a two to three-hour journey. Points of interest include the Gaogouli History Museum, the ancient Donggou Tombs, the River Yalu and the bridge leading across to North Korea (closed to everybody except residents of this border region). Ji'an is also noted for its vines and apple and pear orchards.
5. **Two or three-day tour to Lake Tianchi**
   This is a train and coach tour, giving tourists the opportunity to admire the unspoilt forests of the Changbai Mountains, the Changbai Fall, Lake Yuanchi and Lake Tianchi itself. Skiing possible in winter.

For more information on the above, please contact CITS directly at: 32 Xinhua Dajie, Tonghua, Jilin Province, China. Tel.: 4624, 2539.

Korean Festivals

The Koreans of northeastern China still celebrate many of their traditional festivals. Here are some of the most important.

Lunar New Year Like the Han Chinese Spring Festival, this falls in late January or early February and is the major festival of the year. On New Year's Eve, nobody goes to bed before midnight. The following morning the children wish their elders Happy New Year and, after breakfast, the family undertakes a round of New Year calls on neighbours and local elders. In the afternoon the fun continues with sports and games and later, in the evening, the older generation settles down to play cards while youngsters enjoy a game of hide-and-seek.

Lantern Festival This too has a direct Han Chinese equivalent and falls in February at the time of the full moon. Tug of war and other traditional sports take pride of place. In the evening, everybody climbs the nearest hill carrying lit pine torches; according to legend, the first to reach the top and see the rising full moon is guaranteed good luck throughout the year.

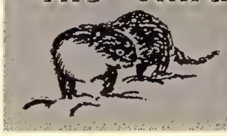
Hanshik Commonly known as Grave-Sweeping Day, this is a time when families take food and wine to their ancestors' graves and make sure they are clean and tidy. *Hanshik* literally means 'cold food'. In the past it was taboo to light a fire on this day, which usually falls in May.

Tano Day The fifth day of the fifth lunar month (the Han Chinese Double Five or Dragon Boat Festival), usually falling in June. Associated with ancient agricultural rites, it is an occasion for singing, dancing and drinking. Wrestling and playing on swings are popular with the younger generation. Korean women comb their hair with water scented with calamus (a type of reed), a wish for prosperity.

Chusok The same as the Mid-Autumn Festival or Moon Festival of the Han Chinese, this takes place on the fifteenth day of the eighth lunar month in September or early October. Special cakes and sweets are prepared to celebrate the harvest, offerings are placed before the ancestral tombs, and the moon is admired.

Winter Solstice At the time of the winter solstice in December, a special rice and red bean porridge is eaten. This is said to slow down the ageing process, expel ghosts and evil spirits, prevent illness, and more!

The 'Third Treasure' of the Northeast



The vast forests and frigid climate of China's northeastern provinces provide the right living conditions for two animals and a plant of particular value. We have already devoted Special Features articles to the **ginseng** and the **deer,** but have not so far mentioned the third of these 'treasures'.

The **sable** *(Mustela zibellina),* one of the weasel and marten family, grows to about the size of a domestic cat, with a body up to fifty centimetres long and a short bushy tail. Its habitat is the forests of Jilin and Heilongjiang in northeastern China and eastern Siberia, where it lives on all kinds of small animals and fish.

As the numbers of sable are on the decline, it is now under state protection in China. Its long winter coat, dark-brown or 'purple' (blue-black) and often tipped with white, very glossy and dense, is or has traditionally been much prized by the furriers of the world.

Ginseng Festival

Every September since 1987, the tourism authorities of Fusong County in Jilin have organized a Ginseng Festival. Popular events include:

- A day trip to the 'Kingdom of Ginseng'. Participants go into the forests to hunt for ginseng in the time-honoured way. They also visit a ginseng farm.
- A day trip into the Changbai Mountains. From Fusong the tour goes southeast into the heart of the range to Tianchi (Lake of Heaven).
- Ginseng Street: this is in fact a market with over 200 kinds of ginseng products on sale.

Other highlights of the festival include a musical concert, an exhibition of lanterns, calligraphy, photography and paintings related to ginseng, a bonfire party, etc.

● ●

Train Schedules
Changchun–Jilin–Tumen

391 O.	315 O.	255 F.T.	97 Exp.	95 Exp.	Train No. Station	96 Exp.	98 Exp.	256 F.T.	316 O.	392 O.
	From Shenyang	From Tianjin						To Tianjin	To Shenyang	
17:12	18:52		21:50	09:39	**Changchun**	16:22	05.02		03:45	08:14
18:14	20:18		—	—	**Jiutai**	15:33	04:08		02:19	07:20
19:32	21:47	12:10	00:16	11:38	**Jilin**	14:18	02:47	16:14	00:58	06:02
	00.04	14:50	02:56		**Jiaohe**		00:40	14:07	22:25	
	03:02	17:30	05:32		**Dunhua**		22:20	11:50	19:55	
	04:24	19:01	06:49		**Antu**		20:45	10:18	18:18	
	05:58	20:36	08:02		**Yanji**		19:26	08:51	16:37	
	06:50	21:28	09:05		**Tumen**		18:15	07:44	15:30	

Exp. – Express
F.T. – Fast through passenger train
O. – Ordinary passenger train

Train Schedules
Shenyang–Jilin–Tonghua

301* O.	301* O.	271 F.T.	255 F.T.	107/116 F.T.	Train No. Station	108/105 F.T.	256 F.T.	272 F.T.	302* O.	302* O.
From Dalian	From Dalian	From Beijing	From Tianjin	From Qingdao		To Qingdao	To Tianjin	To Beijing	To Dalian	To Dalian
21:29	21:29	09:29	03 07	06:56	**Shenyang**	04:41	01:40	06:06	00:30	00:30
—	—	10:36	04:06	07:58	**Fushun**	03:31	00:29	04:55	—	—
22:52	22:52	10:59	—	08:23	**Zhangdang**	—	—	04:28	22:50	22:50
23:49	23:49	11:56	—	09.20	**Cangshi**	—	—	03:25	—	—
00:38	00:38	12:48	06:10	10:15	**Qingyuan**	01:19	22:26	02.39	21:02	21.02
02:55	02:28	14:23	07:57	11.56	**Meihekou**	23:55	20 58	00.51	19:19	19:19
—	03:12	15:12	08:36	—	**Huinan (Chaoyangzhen)**	—	20:07	23:52	18:07	—
—	04:48	16:46	10.13	—	**Yantongshan**	—	18:17	22:15	16:02	—
—	05:23	17:22	—	—	**Shuanghezhen**	—	—	21:37	15:23	—
—	06:33	18:33	12:10	—	**Jilin**	—	16:14	20:22	14:07	—
05:50			To Tumen	14:45	**Tonghua**	20:39	From Tumen			15:53

* Departs every other day

Flights to and from Changchun

Route	Day of Week	Dep.	Arr.	Flight No.
Beijing–Changchun	1 3	15:40	17:10	CACJ6148
	1 5	10:00	11:40	CACJ6152
	2 6	10.30	12:05	CACJ6144
	4 7	10:35	12:05	CACJ6142
Changchun–Beijing	1 3	18:05	19:35	CACJ6147
	1 5	17:40	19:15	CASJ6151
	2 6	17:55	19:30	CASJ6143
	4 7	12:50	14:20	CACJ6141
Chengdu–Changchun	5	14:00	17:25	CASZ4605
Changchun–Chengdu	5	18:10	21:50	CASZ4606
Dalian–Changchun	5	14:15	17:10	CACJ6644
	3 7	14:15	16:05	CACJ6348
Changchun–Dalian	4	08:00	10:50	CACJ6643
	2 6	08:10	10:00	CACJ6347
Guangzhou–Changchun	3	09:45	13:25	CASZ4633
	1 5	12:50	16:55	CACJ6344
	2 6	13:00	17:05	CACJ6342
	4 7	13:20	17:25	CACZ3607
Changchun–Guangzhou	3	14:10	18:05	CASZ4634
	1 5	12:25	16:52	CACJ6343
	2 6	12:45	16:50	CACJ6341
	4 7	18:20	22:25	CACZ3608
Nanjing–Changchun	3 7	10:30	16:05	CACJ6348
Changchun–Nanjing	2 6	08:10	13:40	CACJ6347
Qingdao–Changchun	3 7	12:25	16:05	CACJ6348
Changchun–Qingdao	2 6	08:10	11:45	CACJ6347
Shanghai–Changchun	7	10:40	13:05	CACJ6544
	2 6	09:45	12:10	CACJ6542
Changchun–Shanghai	7	16:00	18:35	CACJ6543
	2 6	12:55	15:30	CACJ6541
Shenyang–Changchun	1	19:45	20:40	CACJ6346
	5	16:15	17:10	CACJ6644
Changchun–Shenyang	1	07:20	08:30	CACJ6345
	4	08:00	08:55	CACJ6643
Tianjin–Changchun	1	17:00	20:40	CACJ6336
Changchun–Tianjin	1	07:20	11:05	CACJ6345
Wuhan–Changchun	3 7	08:20	16:05	CACJ6348
Changchun–Wuhan	2 6	08:10	16:00	CACJ6347
Xiamen–Changchun	6	14:25	17:55	CAWH2682
	7	11:40	15:15	CACJ6842
Changchun–Xiamen	6	10:10	13:40	CAWH2681
	7	13:45	17:20	CACJ6841
Xi'an–Changchun	6	07:00	09:25	CAWH2607
Changchun–Xi'an	6	18:40	21:40	CAWH2608
Yanji–Changchun	4	15:00	17:00	CACJ6648
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	18:15	19:25	CACJ6642
Changchun–Yanji	5	08:10	09:20	CACJ6647
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	06:50	08:00	CACJ6641
Zhengzhou–Changchun	1	14:30	20:40	CACJ6346
Changchun–Zhengzhou	1	07:20	13:55	CACJ6345

(Valid Summer and Autumn 1990)

Hotels in Jilin

City/County	Name	Address	Telephone	Tariff (¥, double)	
				Group	Individual
Changchun	Changbaishan Hotel	12 Xinmin Street	883551	126	180
	Nanhu Hotel	2 Nanhu Street	883571	120	180
	Chunyi Hotel	2 Stalin Street	37917	100	120
	Jixiang Hotel	80 Jiefang Road	820607	—	—
	Changchun Hotel	10 Xinhua Road	829920	110	180
Jilin	Dongguan Hotel	2 Jiangwan Road	454272	90	120
	Jiangcheng Hotel	4 Jianguan Road	457721	90	120
	Xiguan Hotel	155 Chuanying Street	243141	—	—
	The Milky-Way Hotel	175 Songjiang Road	241780	100	150
Yanji	Baishan Hotel	2 Youyi Road	515958	130	180
Tonghua	Dongshan Hotel	28 Jingyu Road	8101, 7830	70-90	100
	Tonghua Hotel	22 Cuiquan Road	3275, 4263	70-90	100
	Yuhuangshan Hotel	26 Yuquan Road	2785, 2922	70-90	100
Ji'an	Ji'an Hotel	98 Yingbin Road	3594, 3593	70-90	100
	Cuiyuan Hotel	47 Shengli Road West	2121, 2123	70-90	100
Hunjiang	Huijiang Hotel	124, Huangjiang Street	—	—	80
	Lushuihe Baishan Hotel	Lushuihe Forestry Bureau	—	—	75
	Fusong Hotel	Fusong	—	—	75
	Changbai Hotel	Changbai Korean Autonomous County	—	—	75
	Linjiang Hotel	Linjiang Forestry Bureau	—	—	75
	Mine Administration Bureau Hotel	68 Xinjian Road, Badaojiang	—	—	75
	Jingyu Hotel	Jingyu County	—	—	75
Antu	Tianchi Hotel	Changbaishan Shanzhuang	2441-216	120	180
	Yuehua Hotel	Changbaishan Nature Reserve	—	110	170
	Baishan Villa	Changbai Mountains	—	110	110
	Meirensong Guesthouse	Baihe Forestry Bureau	—	100	100

Train Schedules
Beijing-Shenyang-Changchun-Harbin-Qiqihar

59 Exp.	57/56 Exp.	39 Exp.	17 Exp.	Train No. / Station	18 Exp.	40 Exp.	58/55 Exp.	60 Exp.
	From Shanghai						To Shanghai	
15:50		20:32	14:30	**Beijing**	11:55	06:32		10:47
**	03:57	22:19	*	**Tianjin**	*	04:55	10:14	**
20:31	07:47	01:53	18:46	**Shanhaiguan**	07:49	01:24	06:30	06:00
22:50	10:10	04:12	—	**Jinzhou**	—	22:59	04:05	03:35
02:00	13.32	07:22	00:04	**Shenyang**	02:32	20:00	01:06	00:36
06:17	17:59	11:30	04:09	**Changchun**	22:27	15:51	20:36	20:06
	21:55	14:58	07.16	**Harbin**	19:03	12:24	17:03	
	22:07	—	08:03	**Sankeshu**	18:22	—	16:25	
		19:03		**Qiqihar**		08:02		

* – via the Beijing–Qinhuangdao line
** – via the Beijing–Tuozitou line

Average Climatic Conditions in Jilin

		Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Jilin	Temperature (°C)	-18.0	-14.3	-3.7	6.7	14.7	19.9	22.9	21.2	14.7	6.5	-3.9	-13.4
	Rainfall (mm)	5.4	6.2	12.5	31.5	53.3	104.3	194.9	133.9	68.0	42.2	15.6	6.4
Yanji	Temperature (°C)	-14.4	-10.8	-2.4	6.6	13.8	17.7	21.3	21.1	14.7	6.7	-3.2	-11.7
	Rainfall (mm)	4.3	4.9	8.3	24.7	49.8	85.2	95.6	128.7	55.2	26.2	15.0	6.2
Lake Tianchi	Temperature (°C)	-23.2	-21.5	-16.6	-8.1	-0.9	4.0	8.6	8.1	1.5	-5.5	-13.6	-20.6
	Rainfall (mm)	12.7	14.5	36.0	73.2	106.5	186.7	346.2	307.3	138.6	51.2	41.5	18.3

Train Schedule Tonghua–Ji'an

565 O.	Train No. / Station	566 O.
07:39	**Tonghua**	16:44
08:29	**Yayuan**	16:09
09:07	**Guosong**	15:31
10.42	**Huangbai**	14:15
11:41	**Ji'an**	13:08

Train Schedules
Changchun–Tonghua–Hunjiang

348/345 O.	344/341 O.	Train No. / Station	342/343 O.	346/347 O.
21:28	09:20	**Changchun**	08:25	16:55
22:16	09:56	**Fanjiatun**	07:53	16:23
22:49	10:30	**Gongzhuling**	07:17	15:52
00:15	11:40	**Siping**	06:10	14:53
01:41	13:17	**Pinggang**	04:13	13:22
02:20	14:00	**Liaoyuan**	03:28	12:43
03:53	15:53	**Meihekou**	01:34	11:14
04:34	16:15	**Liuhe**	00:44	10:26
—	17:49	**Tonggou**	—	—
07:30	18:41	**Tonghua**	22:34	08:13
08:49		**Hunjiang**	20:45	

Train Schedules
Tonghua–Hunjiang–Baihe (Erdao Baihe)

353 O.	351 O.	Train No. / Station	352 O.	354 O.
08:46	20:52	**Tonghua**	06:05	16:12
10:07	22:33	**Hunjiang**	05:00	14:18
10:35	23:06	**Sanchazi**	04:10	13:34
11:36	00:05	**Wangou**	03:08	12:30
12:35	00:53	**Songshuzen**	02.17	11.40
13:16	01:36	**Xianrenqiao**	01:29	10:52
14:09	02:30	**Songjianghe**	00:32	09.58
14:59	03:20	**Quanyang**	23:48	09:14
16:05	04:26	**Lushuihe**	22:35	08:00
16:59	05:20	**Baihe**	21:40	07:05

The Climate of the Changbai Mountains

The climatic conditions of the Changbai Mountains are behind their ecological and scenic diversity.

The foothills, from 600 to 1,100 metres above sea-level, enjoy a warm and moist climate. The average July temperature can reach 19 to 21°C, annual precipitation 700 to 800 millimetres. The major vegetation is a mixture of broadleaf and coniferous forests. The thick layer of humus-rich soil nourishes many species of plants used in Chinese herbal medicine such as ginseng and *Gastrodia elata*. However, due to over-digging during the past few years, it has become rare to find wild ginseng in this area.

Between 1,100 to 1,800 metres above sea-level, the range experiences an obvious drop in temperature. The average temperature in July is only 14 to 19°C, while the annual precipitation increases to 800 to 1,000 millimetres. Winters are cold and wet, summers cool and damp. The forest bed is extremely moist and dark. Mosses find this the ideal habitat and spread all over the forest floor like a lush green carpet, as much as ten centimetres deep.

Beyond the coniferous forest in the frigid temperate zone, the mountains become more precipitous. Here the July average is 12 to 14°C and the wind is stronger. The conifers cannot survive in such a harsh habitat and give way to a dwarf species of birch. It is too cold for mosquitoes, even in summer, so many animals such as deer move up here then to take refuge from the irritating insects.

The upper section of the Changbai volcanic peaks upwards of 2,100 metres above sea-level is a world of wind, snow and ice. Take the Tianchi Weather Station as an example. The station is located at 2,624 metres above sea-level on the northern slope of Mount Baitou, the main peak of the Changbai Range. The average July temperature is only 8.6°C. Snow falls for an average ten months of the year and, during the eight months from early October to late May, this area is entirely covered with snow and ice. For the staff at the Tianchi Weather Station, life is not at all easy. The weather station is buried under snow every winter, so it is like living in an igloo. They have to dig tunnels for light, fresh air and a passage to the outside world, and saw out ice blocks to use as water. Of China's 3,000 weather stations, this one at Mount Baitou has to withstand the strongest wind forces. The annual average wind speed is 11.7 metres per second and, on average, 267.8 days in the year experience winds of force 8 on the Beaufort Scale.

Jilin's Winter Charms

Since its opening to tourism, the city of Jilin has become a popular destination, especially during the winter, when the willows along the three-kilometre-long bank of the River Songhua are covered with crystal-clear ice or rime.

The three factors necessary for the formation of rime are the presence of fog, sub-zero temperatures and sufficient wind to carry the water droplets. Although Jilin is by no means unique, it is one of a few places in China which have made a name for their extraordinary rime formations.

The city is embraced by mountain ranges, while the Songhua zigzags among the valleys and makes three turns. Even at minus 20 or 30°C, the river does not freeze. The thick layer of fog which almost always veils the river surface in the morning, especially during late autumn or early winter, provides abundant material for rime. Such fog is formed since, during the night, water bodies such as lakes and rivers lose heat less quickly than the air, so the difference between water and atmospheric temperature is great. Atmospheric temperature in Jilin can drop to as much as minus 20 or 30°C in winter, producing a difference between water and atmospheric temperature of more than 30°C. This is why the fog over the River Songhua is exceptionally thick.

Rime usually forms at dusk; is reinforced during the night and rapidly melts under the sun's rays the next day. The average period for rime to last is twenty hours and the longest period ever recorded at the Jilin Number Nine Meteorological Station, situated on the river's lower course approximately ten kilometres from the city centre, was 44 hours and 57 minutes (February, 1958).

Jilin is an industrial city with more than a million people. Its chemical, electrical and metal industries emit large volumes of industrial waste particles which pollute the air. In the winter, the moisture-absorbent waste particles are prevented from dispersing by the extreme difference between water and land temperatures during the night and are incorporated into the water vapour rising from the river. This condenses to form water droplets which in turn freeze onto tree branches and other objects to become rime. Therefore one could say that Jilin's rime helps to purify the air – at the long-term expense of the trees.

Just how frequently does this occur? According to the Number Nine Station, the months most likely to experience rime are November through March with December, January and February as the peak period.

But, although rime is frequent, it does not necessarily occur every day, even in January. According to statistics for 1981 to 1987 there was an average of only 8.6 rime days during January in these seven years. In 1985 there was a seventeen-day rime-free period from January 3 to 19. This was a great disappointment for those tourists who came especially for Jilin's renowned winter beauty (rather like going on a skiing holiday in the European Alps and finding no snow, as has also happened recently!).

Experts from the Jilin Meteorology Department have therefore spent three years analyzing data concerning thousands of cases of rime formation and have come up with a preliminary method of forecasting Jilin rime, with satisfactory results. With this method, the number of rime days for each month can be forecast early to allow tourism-related services ample time to arrange tours.

Here's my own rule-of-thumb forecasting method. If there is a clear sky, low temperature and a wind speed of one to three metres per second in the evening, you can be eighty percent sure of seeing rime the following morning.

Lin Zhiguang

Translated by Chapman Lee

Jilin: Past Coverage in CHINA TOURISM

No. 36	Yanbian Exotica
No. 41	Jilin Special (Changbaishan in Autumn; Winter in Jilin; Lantern Festival in Fusong; Beautiful Land and People: Impressions of Yanbian)
No. 84	Changchun: One-Time Site of Puppet Manchukuo
No. 86	Life in Yanbian
No. 91	Tumen, a Quiet Border Town
No. 101	Tours with a Difference: Catering for Special Interests
No. 121	A Secretive Land Lifts the Veil

NEWS

Hotel Update

Yet another Beijing hotel has started operations. The **Guotai Hotel**, an affiliate of China International Trust & Investment Corporation (CITIC) and a member of the China Tourism Association, is located on Jianguomenwai Street in Beijing close to the CITIC Building, Friendship Store and Jianguo Hotel. The hotel has 164 well-equipped rooms and suites and offers a range of services. Its restaurants specialize in the cuisine of Jiangsu Province.

In Shanghai, the **Shanghai JC Mandarin** is now open for business. This deluxe hotel on Nanjing Road West features limousine service to and from the airport and has fluent English-speaking staff. The hotel is offering an introductory discount of 35% off published room rates through until March 31 1991.

Sichuan Tours Mushroom

The Sichuan branch of China Travel Service (CTS) has come up with a number of new tours in an attempt to lure more tourists back to that province in western China. They include the following:

- A fifteen-day tour to the fourteen minority peoples of the province;
- A circuit of Buddhist monasteries (mainly intended for religious communities from abroad);
- A fifteen to twenty-day circuit of Sichuan's mountains — Emei, Qingcheng, Gongga, Siguniang;
- A special tour to explore the cuisine of Sichuan;
- A visit to the Wolong Nature Reserve to see the giant panda in its native habitat and to survey the measures being undertaken to boost its survival;
- A five-day tour from Chengdu, the provincial capital, to Hanzhong in neighbouring Shaanxi to view remains from the Three Kingdoms Period of the third century, following in the footsteps of the famous general, Zhuge Liang;
- A six-day tour devoted to Sichuan's Wuliang Ye (Five-Grain Liquor);
- A one-week tour to Zigong, site of what is said to be the largest dinosaur museum in the world, and a noted 'graveyard of dinosaurs'.

Sino-Soviet Railway Near Completion

More news on the railway line which will link China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region with the Soviet Union's Kazakhstan, making it possible to send goods (and, hopefully, eventually to travel) from Lianyungang on the eastern coast of Jiangsu Province right through to Rotterdam in the Netherlands. The 460-kilometre section between Urümqi and the Sino-Soviet border at the Alataw Pass should be completed this August, finalizing the 12,000-kilometre intercontinental connection. This will be China's third link with the Soviet Union and is expected to boost cross-border trade as well as bolster China's economic links with Europe. The line will pass through thirty countries.

Hebei Tour Programmes

The tourism authorities of Hebei Province have launched a series of new programmes and tours aimed at both domestic and foreign tourists:

- In Beidaihe, during the 11th Asian Games in September/October, boats will be available for hire so that spectators can follow the aquatic events from the sea;
- Also offered — a combined tour of the Imperial Palace (Palace Museum) in Beijing and the Qing imperial summer resort of Chengde in northeastern Hebei;
- Plus tours to the Great Wall at Jinshanling, Jiaoshan and Shanhaiguan, the eastern end of the wall.

Other possibilities include trips to Lake Baiyangdian; a trip to Anguo devoted to traditional Chinese medicine; and others to Baoding for calligraphy, to Zhengding for cultural relics, and to Cangzhou for martial arts.

On-the-Spot Visas for Hainan

Foreign visitors from countries which enjoy diplomatic relations or official trade relations with China can now obtain visas to enter Hainan Province on arrival in that island off the south coast. The ports of entry, Haikou and Sanya, have been given authorization to issue fifteen-day visas. Travel certificates can also be issued to Taiwanese visitors at these entry points. However, no dispensation is possible for foreign journalists and Chinese journalists from Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan, who must still apply for visas in advance as stipulated in the State Council's regulations covering journalists.

Air Travel News

The Chinese airline authorities have noted that it is now possible, under the auspices of CAAC, to take charter flights between Hong Kong and twenty-seven mainland cities. The most frequent charter flights are those to Fuzhou (fifteen flights a week in each direction), but there is also a daily flight each way between Hong Kong and Guilin, Nanjing, Shantou and Haikou. Other charter destinations include Chengdu, Xi'an, Wuhan, Qingdao, Shenyang, Zhengzhou, Chongqing, Zhanjiang, Hefei, Nanchang, Meixian and Changsha.

Early this August, following the opening of the airport in Zhejiang's Wenzhou reported elsewhere, Air China inaugurated a twice-weekly flight between Beijing and Wenzhou by Boeing 737. Wenzhou is now linked by air with Shanghai, Guangzhou, Xiamen, Ningbo and Beijing — an important development since the open port city has no rail links with the hinterland.

Three Water-Based Tours

Emperor Qianlong of the Qing dynasty made six inspection tours to the south of China; in the course of five of them he visited Yangzhou on the north bank of the Yangtse in Jiangsu Province. The city's tourism office has now organized a water trip which follows part of the imperial dragon boat's route. Places visited include the famous Shouxihu (Slender West Lake) and the picturesque Ershisi (Twenty-Four) Bridge.

A very different sort of water tour is offered by the Pearl River Navigation Company of Guangdong Province. Different because the vessel used is a warship! There are four possible tours: to the port of Huangpu (Whampoa), to Mount Lianhua (Lotus Flower), to Humen (Tiger's Mouth) or to Longxue (Dragon Cave) Island. Incidentally, tourists are permitted to try their hand at the anti-aircraft machine guns.

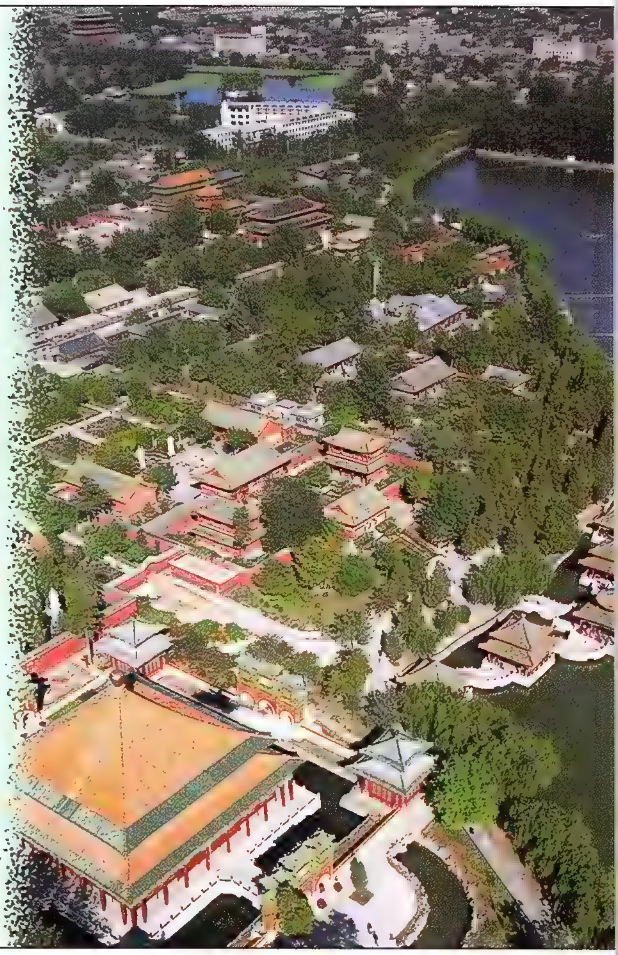
Yet another water-based tour is being offered by Ningxia Tourism Bureau. The northern Chinese province of Ningxia is generally thought of as a desert region yet, in the middle of sand-dunes fifty-seven kilometres north of the provincial capital Yinchuan, lies a crescent-shaped lake fringed by reeds. 667 hectares in area, it forms a welcome stopover point for migrating birds. A tourism complex comprising restaurants, shops, swimming pool as well as quayside and reception centre has been constructed here (for more on Ningxia, see CHINA TOURISM no. 96).

NEXT ISSUE

BEIJING SPECIAL

The heart of modern China as it was of the China of the emperors, offering the tourist magnificent historical sites and an ever-increasing number of world-class hotels, Beijing is still one of the places you must see if you wish to understand the Chinese as a nation:

- **City of Superlatives**
- **Beijing Enters the '90s**
- **Majestic Tian'anmen**
- **The *Qigong* Craze Continues**
- **Classic Beauty Beyond Compare — The Palace Museum**
- **A Night in the Shadow of the Ming Tombs**



'The Light of Coal Mines'

That's the name of a large-scale lantern festival being held in Beijing's Beihai Park from August 1 to October 10 this year, since it is sponsored by the coal mines of Shanxi Province. The spectacle will include 173 lantern groupings on historic and literary themes such as scenes from *A Dream of Red Mansions* and *Journey to the West.* Shanxi's famous landscapes (such as Mount Wutai and the Taihang Mountains) will also feature among the lantern tableaux.

Second Confucius Festival

Qufu in Shandong Province — hometown of the great sage Kong Qiu, Confucius — is preparing for its Second Confucius Festival, opening on September 26. Apart from a gala show featuring music and dances based on research into ancient palace and folk music and musical instruments, a ceremony will be held to inaugurate the Confucius Literary Hall in the Kong Family Mansions. An international forum on Confucian philosophy will also be held. The festival marks the 2,541st anniversary of the birth of the sage.

For the Shoe Fetishist!

Reportedly the first of its kind in China, the China Ancient Shoes Museum has opened in Sixian, northern Anhui Province. It is intended to preserve traditional shoe designs as a pattern for new and novel styles; to promote international study of past footwear; and to amass a collection of domestic and foreign footwear with a view to the history of world shoe-making. Calligraphic works relating to shoe culture are exhibited, as well as over 300 pairs of Chinese shoes and over 500 photos of shoes from fifty-five countries dating back over 4,000 years.

Fuzhou — Jewellery City

The biggest centre for jewellery processing and trading in China should soon be ready for business in Fuzhou, capital of Fujian Province, on the southeastern seaboard. Covering an area of 18,000 square metres, the centre — dubbed 'Jewellery City' — will include five jewellery-processing workshops and an exhibition and sales centre, and will employ around 3,000 workers. The centre is being built by the Fujian Jewellery Import and Export Company Ltd.

Airport Developments

July saw a spate of airport openings. Lishe Airport at Ningbo in Zhejiang opened on July 1 after a three-year construction period, followed on July 4 by another new airport in Zhejiang — this one at Wenzhou. Both are equipped with runways 2,500 metres long and 45 metres wide and cost between 120 million and 130 million Yuan each. They are able to handle Boeing-737s as well as MD-82s. These new developments bring the number of airports in eastern China to twenty-three. A five-year project to further develop air links in the region and to update and extend existing airport facilities is currently underway.

Also in July, an extension project to turn Lhasa's Gonggar Airport into a modern international airport was officially launched. The expected completion date is August or September 1991. A 4,000-metre-long, 60-metre-wide runway is to be constructed and advanced ground equipment installed to enable the airport to handle large passenger and freight craft. The airport is located 98 kilometres southeast of the Tibetan capital at 3,540 metres above sea-level.

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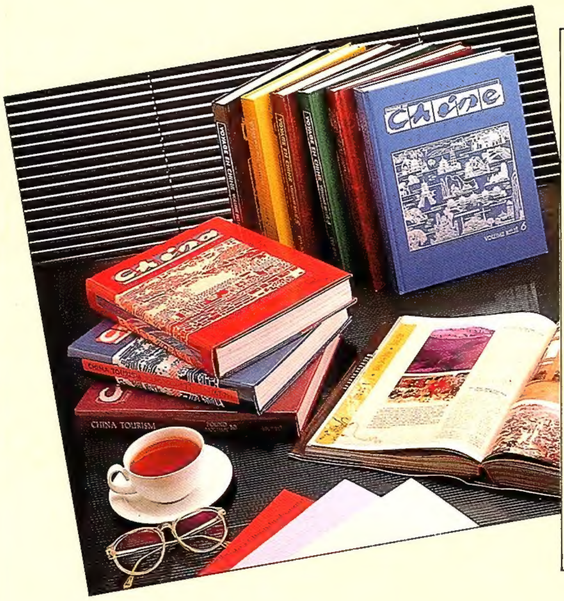

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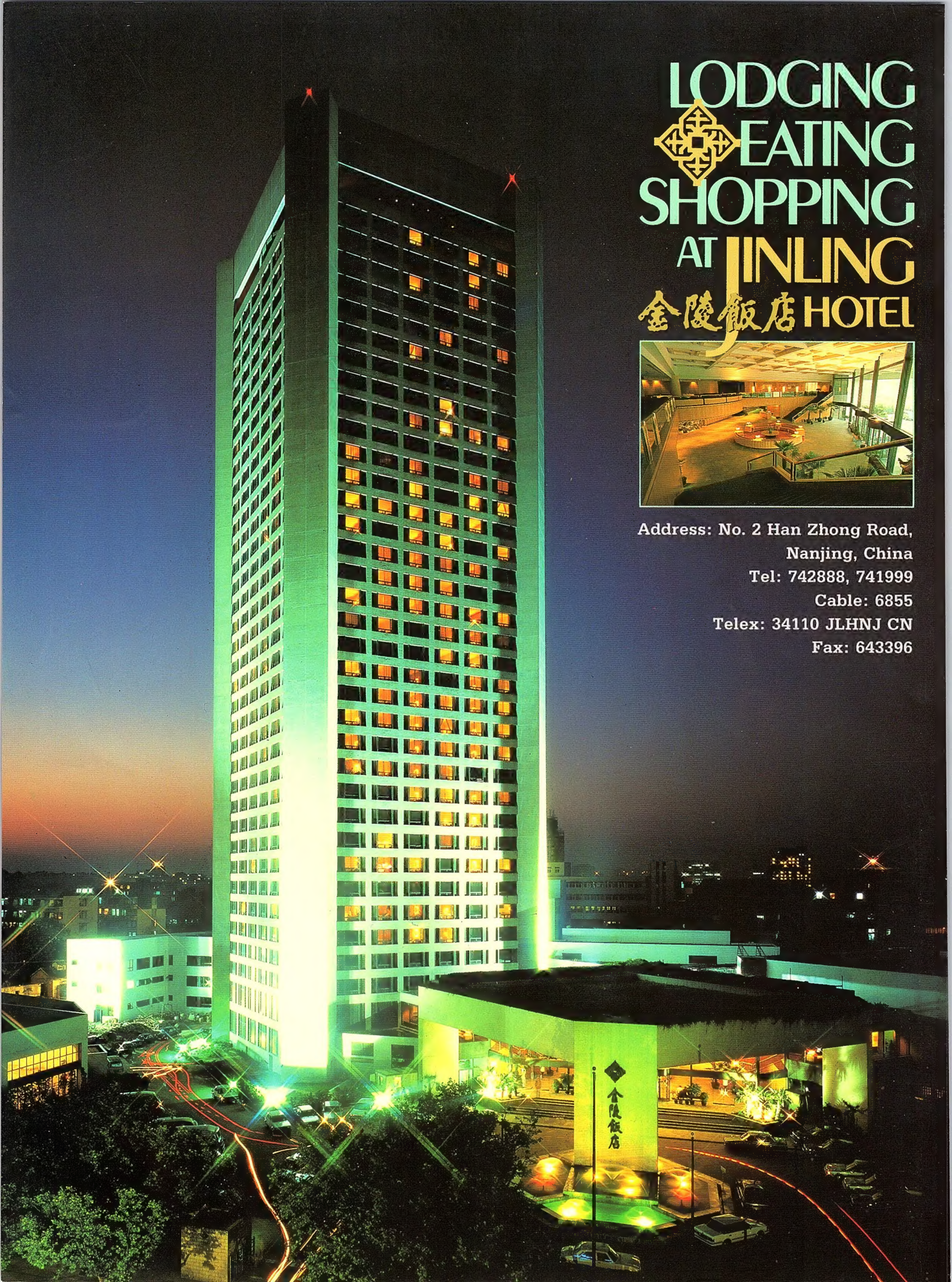

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